ULSTER: VOTING & KILLING **ANDREW BOYD**

THE NATION

APRIL 2, 1973 *50 cents*

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Let Them Eat Less

THE SUPERCOST OF SUPERMARKETS

Brontosaurs in the Food Chain

JENNIFER CROSS

Special Issue

POETRY IN TRANSLATION

German, Vietnamese, Russian, Italian Verse

•

Essays on Political Poetry;
Italian, Zuni, Israeli Poetry

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LETTERS

open admissions

Teaneck, N.J.

DEAR SIRS: In view of the seriousness of the charge of racism, particularly when leveled against college professors at a public-supported institution such as the City College of New York, and more especially when leveled against those who have actively fought racism all of their lives, one would reasonably expect that the basis for the charge should be given and that the person purported to have made the accusation should actually have made it.

Neither condition is met by Peter Sourian's "Open Admissions: A Pilgrim's Progress" [*The Nation*, Feb. 12], which includes just such a baseless and unsubstantiated attack on Prof. Howard Adelson and me. . . .

Sourian *apparently* does not make the accusation himself. After referring to Adelson and me as "campus pariahs," who are "vociferously critical of the present situation" (others, according to Sourian, admit their dissatisfaction "only in-private, and when pressed"), he launches into the charge indirectly: "Adelson and Heller insist they're not racist." Obviously, if we are defending, someone, yet to be named, is attacking.

Sourian then gives an oblique and truncated reference to some of my earlier civil rights activities, after which he returns to the still vague accusation, saying that (Dr. Charles) "Baskerville, a tall, soft-spoken black says these professors *are* racist. He says this gently, tolerantly, definitely, convincingly; the implication is that they really don't know they are." Now, having crystallized the charge—a charge, incidentally, which can destroy a professional career—he abruptly drops any further reference to it—no evidence, no basis, simply the charge itself, then silence on the subject. There is one major flaw in this attribution: Baskerville, with whom I've been on friendly terms for years, has denied in a phone conversation with me that he ever made the accusation. . . . Let us be generous and assume that Sourian has misinterpreted something actually said by Baskerville—or someone. Thus, *no one* has said we're racist but somehow, there in print is the charge. . . .

Also, at least a few of Sourian's statements are out of date. . . . That which describes me as an associate professor and includes my charge that my promotion was blocked for political reasons deserves at least a brief note. . . . With the help of the faculty union, I won my battle for promotion to full professor retroactive to January 1972. . . .

In regard to the "pariah" epithet, I merely note that both Adelson and I were *elected* to the faculty senate. Obviously some faculty must have had faith and trust in us.

It may be that Professor Adelson will want to reply for himself when he sees the article, but since he is out of the country at the moment . . . I will comment on Sourian's unwarranted attack on Adelson's teaching and administrative ability. . . . To be sure, Sourian covers himself by attributing the comments to others, yet I know that most of Adelson's students—or, at least, *all* that *I* have ever spoken to—regard him as a truly great dynamic teacher (and I've had occasion to meet many of his pupils since he often calls on me to speak to his classes on certain areas of my own specialization). . . . The fact that one student allegedly feels that Adelson's teaching is too rigid says more about her than about him. Undoubtedly he is inflexible: he still thinks his students should do their homework and learn their lessons. . . . I would judge that the attack on Adelson's administrative ability is equally uncalled for, despite Vice Chancellor Healy's remarks. . . .

I am hardly likely to be viewed as an apologist for, or defender of, Dean Chavarria-Aguilar since it was he who fought most vigorously to prevent my promotion. However, I prefer fairness to political opportunism: after

(Continued on page 425)

EDITORIALS

Information Is Not Privileged

President Nixon's invocation of a "double privilege—the lawyer-client relationship, as well as the Presidential privilege"—in barring the appearance of John W. Dean III before Congressional committees is not only indefensible but, from his point of view, hazardous. Dean is the President's lawyer; press reports do not indicate that he appeared as counsel for any of the individuals involved or suspected of involvement in the Watergate case. If the lawyer-client privilege can be invoked in his behalf, it must be because the President feels that he is personally implicated; i.e., that he might be named in a subsequent indictment as a co-conspirator. It seems inconceivable that he should want this inference to be drawn.

And even in the current inexact usage, the claim of "executive privilege" does not apply to John Dean. Judge and jury agreed that a crime was committed at Watergate. As Sen. Lowell Weicker (R., Conn.) asks: "Can anybody tell me how the national interest is served by having these persons who are suspects not appear?" A more fundamental objection to the President's theory is that "executive privilege" is a myth. There is no specific constitutional sanction for it, none. It can be—and has been—argued that a narrow claim of privilege should be implied insofar as certain conversations between the President and his top advisers are concerned. But President Nixon's contention goes far beyond such a limited—and arguable—proposition. That he should make such a sweeping claim for "the Presidential privilege" is an indication not only of the apprehension that exists in the White House about Watergate but of very bad staff work. For the effect of the President's statement, coupled with the muzzling of L. Patrick Gray, which was treacherous as well as stupid, simply confirms the growing impression of direct White House responsibility for the Watergate crime. One aspect of the President's statement, however, is to be applauded: the challenge he issued to the Congress to test his assertion—and extension—of "executive privilege." The Senate should accept the challenge because a court test is long overdue. Even Nixon's appointees on the Supreme Court will have a difficult time finding a constitutional sanction for the sweeping claim of privilege he asserts.

But if the Constitution is silent about "executive privilege," it does contain a specific guarantee of legislative privilege. Article I, Section 6, the so-called Speech-and-Debate clause, provides: "for any such Speech or Debate in either House, they [the Senators and Representatives] shall not be questioned in any other Place." In decisions last year involving Senator Gravel and former Senator Brewster, the Supreme Court measurably diminished the scope of this privilege. For example, the Chief Justice argued in the Brewster decision that the phrase "in any other place," refers to conduct that must take place "within the walls of the Representatives' Chambers."

In order to speak or debate to some purpose, legisla-

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tors must seek information and follow leads far outside those hallowed walls, but by making a distinction between "legislative" and "political" activities—a distinction manifestly difficult to apply in practice, and never before attempted—the Court has put the Congress on notice that its members may be questioned by courts and grand juries about their activities in the latter category. In the words of Sen. Lee Metcalf (*Congressional Record*, February 28) this interpretation of legislative privilege will have an "ominous" effect "on the capability of the Congress to fulfill its role as a coordinate and co-equal body in the constitutionally established form of government conceived by the Founding Fathers in 1789."

The Supreme Court's decision in *Branzburg* v. *Hayes* —involving a newsman's claim of privilege—was handed down the same day as the decisions involving Gravel and Brewster, a coincidence that prompted *The Washington Post* to observe: "If there was one resounding note in the welter of opinions from the Supreme Court Thursday [June 29, 1972], it was the low value the Court's new majority places on the flow of information."

This, of course, is the crux of the matter. "Legislative immunity," Senator Metcalf pointed out, "is not the personal prerequisite of a legislator. . . . It is the independence of the legislative branch—not the special status of a legislator—which is at stake when the speech or debate clause is diminished in scope." Hearings now being conducted by the Joint Committee on Congressional Operations will assess the threat to the flow of information between Congress and the people that arises from the Supreme Court's decisions in the Gravel and Brewster cases. The legislator and the newsman share what Senator Metcalf calls an "identity of position" because of the way recent Supreme Court decisions have diminished the scope of the privileges both assert. Actually, what they assert are not "privileges" but the public's right to know, and their right to know as surrogates of the public. The claim of "executive privilege" has exactly the opposite intention; it is asserted for the purpose of stifling the flow of information and keeping the public in the dark.

ITT's Thirty-Four Boxes

Those boxes hold the records of the merger of Hartford Fire Insurance Co. with International Telephone & Telegraph Co. The latter, Harold Geneen's fief and among the greatest of conglomerates, thus received the lush cash flow of Hartford Fire Insurance premiums. The thirty-four boxes, heretofore sequestered in the vaults of the Department of Justice, contain highly intriguing information on the relations of the Nixon Administration with big business. Part is already known, part is yet to come.

In connection with the merger, the Securities and Exchange Commission put in about two years looking for violations of the securities laws. The thirty-four boxes thus came into its possession. In June 1972 SEC sued ITT, charging the company and certain of its officials with "inside trading." Shortly after the filing of the suit a settlement was reached, making the merger possible.

However, a certain odor still hung about the merger

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The Nation is published weekly (except biweekly in July and August) by the Nation Company and copyright 1973 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10014. Tel: CH 2-8400. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Price: One year $15; two years, $27.50. Add $1 per year postage for Canada and Mexico; $2 other foreign.

Change of Address: It is essential that subscribers ordering a change of address give five weeks' notice and provide their old as well as their new address. Please give Zip Code numbers for both addresses.

Manuscripts. All work submitted will be read by the editors. The magazine cannot, however, be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless they are accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

THE NATION

Volume 216
No. 14

MAR 30 '73

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and its accompanying phenomena, such as the tribulations of Dita Beard and the timely shredding of ITT records. Sniffing the breeze, Rep. Harley O. Staggers (D., W.Va.), chairman of the House Commerce investigative committee, asked William J. Casey, then chairman of the SEC, to turn over the thirty-four boxes to his subcommittee. Since Representative Staggers' subcommittee has jurisdiction over the SEC, the request was eminently proper. Nevertheless, Casey refused Staggers' request.

On or about October 4, 1972, before Staggers could subpoena the records, Casey delivered them to the Department of Justice. The day before this transfer, Casey consulted John W. Dean III, who has since gained national fame as the President's "privileged" counsel. The files were regarded as "politically sensitive" and, since an election was pending, to Justice they went. When Justice is investigating a criminal or possibly criminal case, files in its custody cannot be subpoenaed by a Congressional committee. Justice was at that time investigating a possible perjury case involving ITT, so there was no way to pry the thirty-four boxes out of its grasp.

Ironically, these same files had at one time been in the possession of the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. James O. Eastland. Judiciary got them in connection with its investigation of Richard Kleindienst's fitness to serve as Attorney General. Eastland offered to return the files to ITT on the ground that they had never been subpoenaed by his committee. As late as September 21, 1972, Justice told the SEC that it did not want these files because it preferred to complete its perjury investigation first. Yet they came to it, as manna from heaven, and it still has them.

However, prompted in part by leaks appearing in Jack Anderson's column, Representative Staggers has released an SEC summary of the contents of the thirty-four boxes. No outsider can be certain that this is an authentic summary, but it is intriguing just as it stands. The summary, or working paper, indicates that six top Administration figures had a hand in the behind-the-scenes pressure campaign that induced—"persuaded"—Richard W. McLaren, then head of the Justice antitrust division, now a federal judge, to change his mind about three pending antitrust suits. The Nixon aides involved are: John Connally, Charles Colson, Peter G. Peterson, Maurice H. Stans, John D. Ehrlichman and Vice President Agnew. It appears also that John Mitchell discussed the ITT-Hartford merger with President Nixon, although he denied doing so in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

If the cases had been appealed to the Supreme Court, the merger would have been delayed, and possibly curbed. Solicitor General Erwin Griswold, at the request of Acting Attorney General Kleindienst (before the latter's confirmation) requested a delay in taking the appeal. Since the suits were settled, the appeal was never taken.

So much, and more, can be gleaned from the summary. But the thirty-four boxes of records are still stashed away. In his press conference of March 15 the President trotted out the word "forthcoming" and used it at least four times. "I am very proud of the fact that we are forthcoming," he said. How about suiting the action to the word? These thirty-four file boxes should be immediately forthcoming.

The Beef Boycott

Is there a beef boycott? The answer is definitely "yes," but it is not yet anything like an organized attack on soaring food prices. It is, so far, an *ad hoc* housewives' revolt, with all the strength and weakness of spontaneity. What keeps it going is publicity, spreading from city to city right across the country. It centers on meat, not only because Americans are confirmed carnivores but also because meat is a status symbol.

That is the weakness of the movement—those who can afford to pay more will pay it, and to hell with those who are pinched. But they are a minority, and the majority are worried about food prices, and resentful as well. Their resentment has Mr. Nixon worried.

The boycott started as "a tiny revolt in a tiny place"—Drummond Island, Mich. A woman out there tried to protest to the President against rising food prices, the price of beef in particular. Of course she got nowhere: the White House receives something like 10,000 letters a week. Then she had a publicity brainstorm, in the form of 388 small peanut butter sandwiches which she shipped to the White House. She got an acknowledgment and the media sensed a story. From this comical start the idea of a beef boycott developed. Housewives were to abstain from buying meat during the week beginning March 12. This mini-boycott may have had some effect, or perhaps it was riding on an earlier momentum; in February beef sales at supermarkets had dropped about 4 per cent.

Nothing sensational, but the idea caught on. Now a more systematic boycott is scheduled to begin on April Fool's Day and to continue for a week. Groups are forming all over, holding meetings and demonstrations, mailing grocery bills to the White House, writing to and phoning their Congressmen, etc. Among the Congressmen who were importuned is William Cotter (D., Conn.) and he gave the movement a boost. He feels the timing is excellent because both the House and Senate are considering what should be done about the Economic Stabilization Act, now in its third and apparently declining phase (the revolt of the housewives may have changed that). Mr. Cotter serves on the House Banking and Currency Committee, which will start hearings on March 30; among others, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz will testify.

Mr. Butz had better have some good answers. But are there any? The President certainly has not been inventive in this area. On March 11 he had Department of Agriculture people in for a little jawboning. In a subsequent press conference, his usual overly authoritative manner deserted him. "Let me say one word about the housewives," he began. "I had a letter from one the other day saying, 'Should I boycott?' I am not going to suggest to American housewives or to any group of Americans to join in boycotts. . . . On the other hand

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I would suggest that the greatest and most powerful weapon against high prices in this country is the American housewife. Her decisions, as she buys, whether she buys something that is more expensive or less expensive, have a greater effect than anything we do here." Passing the buck to the housewives, Mr. Nixon still managed to avoid endorsing anything as insurrectionary as a boycott. But a boycott is merely selective buying in its most effective form—refusing to buy at all when prices become exorbitant. James McLane, deputy director of the Cost of Living Council, is even less helpful than Mr. Nixon. His advice to the harried housewife is: "Eat a little bit less."

Some governments and private economists, including officials of the Cost of Living Council, are skeptical of the effects of boycotts such as the one scheduled for April 1. But a week-long avoidance of beef—if widely observed—should provide an interesting if not conclusive test of the extent to which the "free market" model of the economy, in which the tension between supply and demand is supposed to determine price, is still relevant. If prices decline, then presumably supply and demand are still determinants. But if prices do not decline, or if they rise, then it is a fair inference that the "free market" model is obsolete. The Cost of Living Council, it should be noted, is at some pains to make known its view, which is at variance with that of some Administration spokesmen, that food costs will *not* decline in the second half of this year; all that is likely to happen, as the council sees it, is that the rate of increase may decline.

Even if the beef boycott is not widely observed or fails to produce a decrease in price, it will dramatize the public's mounting concern over food prices. And if this concern continues to grow, it may lead to a reimposition of price controls on selected food items. Presidential jawboning will be of little help unless it results in organized consumer resistance. The beef boycott, is, therefore, a small but significant step in the right direction.

The Heroes of Our Time

Official history is traditionally written to the specifications of governments engaged in proving the rightness of their policies, but it's nonetheless unusual to see such mythology created even as the events it purports to interpret are being enacted. If the visitor from outer space—that useful fellow who is always so helpful to our perspectives—had landed here in 1971 or 1972, he would have learned from our government that our principal war aim in Vietnam was the return of our prisoners. What would he have made of that? Or of our "protective reaction strikes" over the cities of North Vietnam?

One of the ruler's myth makers, Presidential aide Patrick Buchanan, has described the POWs as "the genuine heroes of our age and time." With full appreciation of their fortitude, that is a statement about our age more than about them. In the past, prisoners of war have rarely been viewed as heroes by their military commanders; slogans like "never surrender!" were often taken seriously. We, and our POWs, are fortunate that we live in a more enlightened era.

Most of the men now returning had been engaged in dropping explosives on their captors and their captors' families until they themselves were shot down. It is inconceivable that more than a handful of them, if any, had a rational alternative to being taken prisoner. They were not "fanatics," like the enemy, and we are glad they were not.

But, collectively, heroes? More so than the hundreds of thousands who slogged out their tours of duty in the rice paddies as targets of the defenders of the land they were invading? More so than the nearly 50,000 who died to maintain the "honor" of their Presidents? More so than the countless thousands of mutilated, disabled, drug-addicted, unemployable survivors?

Yes, they *are* the heroes of our time, because it serves the political purposes of their ruler to exploit their suffering and so justify the monstrosities committed in the name of our country. They are conspicuous and colorful, also courageous; most of all, they are politically convenient. And they are few enough in number so that their ruler can see to it, when the fanfare is over, that none of them need be embarrassingly unemployed or otherwise abandoned, like the rest of the American victims of this war, to the vagaries of an economy austere in all sectors except that devoted to the preparation of more adventures and the creation of more POWs. They are our *special* heroes because that is the political function they have been made to serve.

LEONARD C. LEWIN

'Muzzle Not the Ox'

Since taking office last December, United Mine Workers President Arnold Miller has taken important steps to make the UMW a more enlightened presence in Appalachia by seeking joint action on the local level with groups working for social change. One aspect of this is his support of strikes by other unions; his most fruitful effort in this area came last month in a hospital strike in the Virginia coal field town of Richlands, population 4,963.

The twenty-one-day strike by the 185 employees of Clinch Valley Clinic Hospital in Richlands ended March 5 in what strike leader Larry Harless called a "historic victory." It was the first strike ever called against a Virginia hospital, and produced the first union contract in a nongovernment hospital in Virginia, a "right-to-work" state. It won hourly raises of 50¢ for workers whose starting pay in most cases was $1.85 an hour, and it improved health, vacation, sick leave, seniority and grievance procedure coverage. The strike accomplished all this despite an anti-picketing injunction that caused 134 arrests, almost all of them women. "We're too much together to be tore apart," said practical nurse Sylvia Rose after her second picket-line arrest.

Active support by UMW membership and officials, from the local level up to Miller, was crucial to the strike's success. Four thousand miners in eighteen Tazewell and Buchanan County mines walked out on February 27 and 28 in sympathy stoppages. UMW local officers and staff representatives picketed, addressed strike meetings and

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made public appeals for residents to boycott the hospital. Then, on March 3, Miller appeared in Richlands to join the pickets and call for an investigation of the finances of privately owned coal-region hospitals such as Clinch Valley and its sister institutions in Welch and Bluefield, W. Va.

The wealthy doctors who own the three hospitals scanned such page-one headlines as "Miller Encourages Hospital Strikers" in the Bluefield *Telegraph* and recalled that patients carrying UMW Health and Welfare Fund cards provide at least a third of Clinch Valley Clinic Hospital business. For another thing, a stroll down Front Street, Richlands' main drag fronting the grimy Norfolk and Western Railroad tracks, revealed almost unanimous strike support. Used-car dealer Raymond Patrick gathered up $400 in small donations in one afternoon and delivered it in an old fruit jar to strike headquarters in the Richlands Moose Hall. "My father," said Patrick, "was blackballed for nineteen years by the Jewell Ridge Coal Corporation for union activities. Everyone around here has things like that to remember." The strike was settled two days after Arnold Miller appeared in Richlands.

The union conducting the strike was the National Union of Hospital and Nursing Home Employees, AFL-CIO, the fast growing national extension of New York's Local 1199, Drug and Hospital Union. Local 1199 gained national recognition for its 113-day strike among black hospital workers in Charleston, S.C. in 1969. The union's Director of Organization Elliott Godoff and organizers Harless and Bob Muehlenkamp were especially happy to hear Miller's March 3rd vow that the UMW would assist in organizing all of Appalachia's hospitals. While Local 1199's previous major successes have been primarily among black workers in the cities, Local 1199 organizers feel the time is now ripe to organize underpaid, unorganized and predominantly white hospital workers in Appalachia.

They agree with UMW District 28 field representative Rufus Keene, who, asked why he was on the Clinch Valley Clinic Hospital picket line on a cold February afternoon, replied: "These strikers are part of organized labor, and we've all got something in common. We create products people use, but we don't get paid the wages to buy back what we produce." The tall, gaunt ex-miner looked out across the Virginia hills and added slowly, "To put it another way, the Bible says, 'Muzzle not the ox that treads the grain.' "

DAN NORTH

Continuing Cigarette Problem

The Surgeon General keeps warning us that cigarette smoking is a major health hazard, and cigarette sales keep increasing. Per capita consumption appears to have stabilized for some groups, but population increase accounts for the higher sales. Most ominous of all is a sharp rise in cigarette smoking among youths of high school age, both girls and boys. It makes them feel grown up, they see it as a sexual attribute in magazine and newspaper ads, and they are not deterred by the Surgeon General's warnings. Kids as young as 7 and 8 are smoking cigarettes.

Banning cigarette advertising from radio and television has had little effect. "American ingenuity and salesmanship have the reputation of being able to sell anything," remarks Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier (D., Wis.). The cigarette industry has rechanneled some 75 per cent of the $225 million a year it expended on TV advertising into newspapers, magazines, billboards, etc. The corner caption, "The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous To Your Health," is lightly passed over, if it is read at all. As for the young, who should be the principal concern of the anti-smoking forces, a prominent Canadian physician who has been active in this field sums it up: "Frightening medical statistics bounce right off them. Cancer is something only old people get and, for them, old age is an eternity away." Of course cancer is not the only hazard, and coronary heart disease, emphysema, etc., afflict and kill not only the old but the middle-aged and even the young. However, experience shows that the medical approach has only limited efficacy.

Should we just give up, blaming it all on "human nature"? In that case, why all the uproar about "hard" drugs, and even marijuana? Or should more radical measures be undertaken? Representative Kastenmeier favors the latter course. "While the advertising dollar tax exemption is extended to all businesses in the country," he says in the *Congressional Record* (February 22, H. 1089), "I feel the harmful and deadly effects of the product which cigarette manufacturers market should prevent these industrialists from enjoying this otherwise universal privilege." Let them advertise if they wish, but at their own expense. Either the advertising will diminish, or the industry's profits will drop, or the cost of cigarettes will rise to still higher levels.

Mr. Kastenmeier has introduced legislation to amend the Internal Revenue Code by removing cigarette advertising as a deductible business expense. Of course there will be an uproar if this legislation seems likely to pass. Alcohol is harmful too, and lobbyists for the liquor interests as well as those of the cigarette industry will rave and roar about do-gooders and health nuts. But isn't it better to brave such onslaughts than to make ourselves ridiculous by issuing official reports on the perils of cigarette smoking, while subsidizing cunningly contrived messages in its favor?

Soldiers as Servants

In the February 15th *Congressional Record*, p. S 2517, Sen. William Proxmire, gadfly of the armed services, takes aim at an outstanding abuse—the employment of enlisted personnel as servants of general and flag officers. Preliminary investigation by the General Accounting Office discloses that 1,722 soldiers and sailors are officially designated as personal aides to generals and admirals, at a cost to the taxpayers of more than $13 million a year for pay and allowances alone. The figure does not include personnel assigned as aides to commanding officers on base; enlisted men in that category may have at least some military duties. Most of the 1,722 are simply house servants, provided according to the "rank-has-its-privileges" tradition.

The 860 officers who are provided with this domestic

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help are all supposed to be in command positions. Generals and admirals are the main beneficiaries, but 110 Navy captains have attendants. In some cases there may be justification for the practice—the captain of an aircraft carrier on a training or combat mission may be on the bridge for extended periods and may have his meals there—but for the most part, especially on shore duty, assigning enlisted "orderlies," as they used to be called, is simply an abuse of privilege.

Proxmire reveals that of the 1,722 personal aides about one-fifth serve in the Washington, D. C. area, and that the ratio there—2.6 aides per qualified officer—is much higher than in other parts of the United States and abroad. This reflects the plethora of brass in the capital and the overblown sense of importance of some of the officers stationed there. The rule of thumb is one aide per star, so that a brigadier general would normally have to get along with one Army-provided servant, but the highest ranking officers are not so confined. The chairman and chiefs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are cared for by six to eight aides apiece, as are certain vice chiefs.

Among the duties of an enlisted man who serves a general or admiral may be grooming not only the officer's car but the cars of all the members of the family. He may do the gardening, cook and launder, run errands for wives, tend bar at private parties, baby-sit, walk the dog, maintain the swimming pool, etc. When the general's wife goes shopping (assuming she shoulders that burden) she may take the aide along to push the cart down the aisles of the supermarket, and of course he drives her there and back.

The GAO data cited by Mr. Proxmire shows distinct racial overtones. The Navy has always been partial to Filipinos and 98 per cent of its aides are of that origin. In the Marine Corps blacks predominate to the extent of 65 per cent. In the Air Force, 36 per cent are black; in the Army, only 17 per cent.

Some enlisted servants like their jobs. A soldier cannot be forced to accept such work, though pressure may be exerted on him to do so. The practice of using soldiers as servants is so well established that the Army runs an enlisted aides' school at Fort Lee, Va. Senator Proxmire has pending a bill, S. 850, which would abolish such schools and end the practice of using military personnel as servants. There is no reason why the taxpayers should solve the servant problem for the families of these well-paid officers, nor does it comport with the dignity of men in uniform to be so employed.

NORTHERN IRELAND

MURDER AND THE BORDER POLL

ANDREW BOYD
Mr. Boyd, a frequent contributor, is the author of Holy War in Belfast *(Grove Press).*

Belfast

The March 8th referendum on whether Northern Ireland should join the Irish Republic or remain part of the United Kingdom was, as everyone expected it would be, exploited by the Ulster Unionists as proof that "an overwhelming majority" of the people wanted to remain citizens of the United Kingdom and not to be absorbed in an all-Ireland Republic. A total of 591,820 votes were cast for the Union with Britain; only 6,463 for an all-Ireland Republic. And so it looked as though the Unionists outnumbered the anti-partitionists by more than 90 to 1. That, however, is far from the case. The Catholics, and what few Republicans there might be among the Protestants, boycotted the poll—and did so perhaps more effectively than the Protestants, who have always been the main supporters of the link with Britain, participated in it.

There are 1.03 million qualified voters on the parliamentary electoral registers of Northern Ireland. Of these —leaving out insignificant minorities like Jews, Moslems and Hindus, who probably number not more than 2,000 electors in the whole community—680,000 (two-thirds) are Protestants, and 350,000 (one-third) are Catholics. The votes cast for continuing the Union with Britain were, therefore, only 57 per cent of the electorate—and that could not be termed, no matter what Unionist propagandists might say, an overwhelming majority.

Catholic abstention had the effect of registering a strong minority opposition to the Union with Britain. It also expressed resentment at the whole idea of a poll which would inevitably favor the Unionists (since their majority is undeniable), and which thus resembled Northern Ireland general elections, all of which, since 1920, have in effect been plebiscites on partition. The Unionists, ignoring other problems, have seen to it that the border was always the prime issue.

Another reason for the Catholic boycott was that the poll, at the insistence of the Unionists and the British Government, was confined to Northern Ireland. Had the question of Northern Ireland's membership in the United Kingdom been put to the whole electorate of the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland and Wales as well as Northern Ireland, a massive majority would undoubtedly have voted to have nothing further to do with Ulster. Britain has been put to so much trouble, expense and international embarrassment by the Ulster Unionists and their Irish Republican enemies that the majority of the British people now want a complete disengagement and the quick withdrawal of all British troops from Northern Ireland. The people of Britain want to be rid of Ulster. It is a heavy burden for them to carry.

If, on the other hand, the border poll had been extended to all Ireland and the people of the Republic been asked to express their views, they would have

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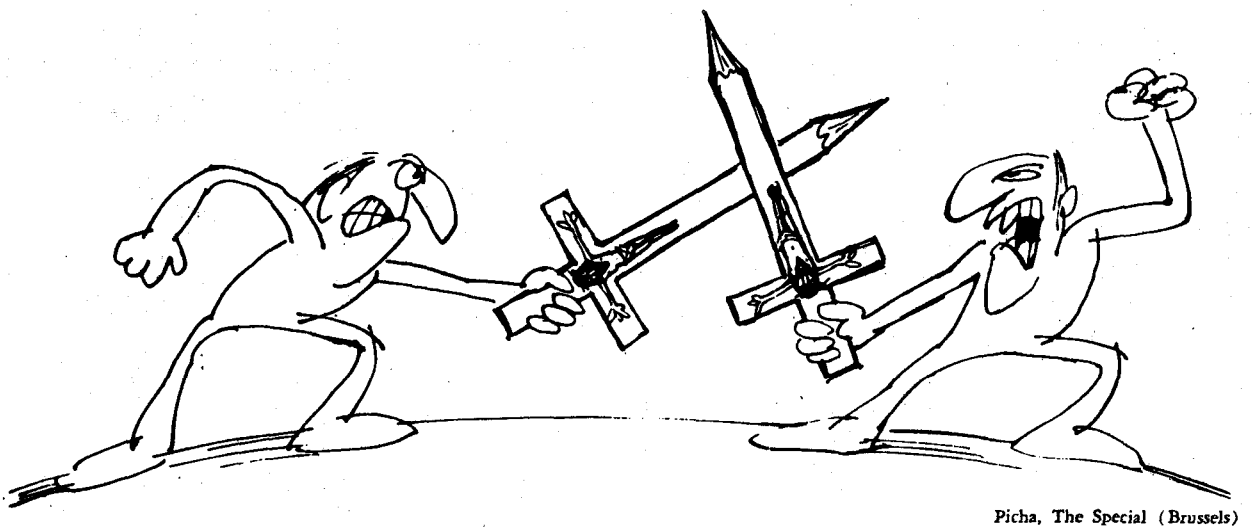

Picha, The Special (Brussels)

decided, notwithstanding the contrary findings of a recent opinion poll, that the island would be better off united under one government than divided as it has been since 1920. The fact that many of the people whose views were sought by the pollsters showed little enthusiasm for a united Ireland at present proved not that they are against national reunification but that they want to keep clear of the violent people who are mounting terror in Northern Ireland. They certainly do not want to have Protestant assassins invading their part of Ireland and fighting the so-called Loyalist cause by murdering defenseless men and boys, which is what they have been doing in Northern Ireland for the past twelve months at least.

Brian Faulkner, leader of the Unionist Party and former Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, has claimed that the pro-Union vote was not entirely sectarian and that 20 per cent of the Catholics, did, in fact, cast their votes for Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom. If he was right—which is very doubtful—then a surprisingly large number of Protestants abstained from expressing an opinion on the vital issue of Northern Ireland's constitution. It would mean that only 521,820 Protestants voted for the Union, leaving 158,180, or about 22 per cent of the Protestant electorate, who apparently did not care whether Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom or became integrated with the Republic.

Faulkner, as was predicted, used the result of the poll as an argument for re-establishing the Northern Ireland (Stormont) Government and parliament with their former powers. Immediately after the poll, Ian Paisley, who seems to have renewed an earlier alliance with Faulkner, called for a coalition of all the disparate Loyalist groups and factions that have been created since the imposition of direct rule from Westminster last March. Paisley's own Democratic Unionist Party is one of those factions. The purpose of his alliance would be to challenge whatever measures the Ulster Loyalists dislike in the British Government's forthcoming White Paper for the future administration of Northern Ireland. Yet before the border poll Paisley was insisting that Northern Ireland should be fully integrated within the United Kingdom, like Scotland and Wales, without any separate parliament or administration of its own.

Faulkner's plan, evident in certain moves he was making before the poll, was to form what he imagined the British would accept as an alliance of "moderates," with himself representing the "law-and-order" Unionists, along with the Northern Ireland Labour Party, the Alliance Party and Paisley's DUP. He has presented these as the pro-constitution parties, to distinguish them from the Nationalists, the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Socialist Republicans, who because they believe in the ultimate reunification of Ireland must be regarded as anti-constitutional. He now wants no talks or alliances with the anti-constitutionalists, yet in June of 1971, when he was Prime Minister, he offered the SDLP and the Nationalists a chance to share in the administration through parliamentary committees to which they would be appointed as paid members and chairmen.

A quartet, consisting of Paisley, Faulkner, Simpson of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and Phelim O'Neill (cousin of the former Northern Ireland Premier, Terence O'Neill), who left the Unionist Party to lead the Alliance Party, assured William Whitelaw, Britain's Secretary of State in Northern Ireland, that they supported him in his efforts to stamp out lawlessness and violence, from whatever quarter. That was on February 9, immediately after the Loyalist extremists, led by William Craig, had caused widespread destruction and chaos by a general strike and a campaign of violence and rioting in which four people were killed and many seriously injured. Craig, whom Faulkner was then treating as an outsider, described the deputation to Whitelaw as "pointless." The leaders of the SDLP thought that Faulkner was merely trying to have himself reinstated as Premier with the help of Paisley on the one hand and the moderates of Alliance and Labour on the other.

Certainly Paisley, Faulkner, the Alliance Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party campaigned vigorously for the maximum Loyalist vote in the border poll; they united in asking the voters to keep Ulster British. Craig did nothing; neither did the SDLP. Craig has, in fact, been advising the Protestants that if the old Stormont is not soon restored the Loyalists should

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declare Northern Ireland's unilateral independence and set up what he calls "an independent British Ulster." Faulkner resents Craig's influence with the Protestant militants and fears a completely independent Ulster. He feels safe as long as Northern Ireland remains part of the United Kingdom, but within that constitutional arrangement wants the greatest possible degree of power for himself and for the Unionist Party. He has, therefore, repudiated Craig and has threatened that if he continues to advocate Protestant independence from Britain he will be expelled from the Unionist Party.

That, at least, was the gist of a speech which Faulkner made at the annual conference of the Ulster Unionist Council on March 5. Former Premier Terence O'Neill must have found that speech interesting because, when he sacked Craig from his cabinet early in 1969 for expressing views similar to those which Faulkner now finds dangerous, Faulkner was one of Craig's staunchest supporters. In fact, he resigned from O'Neill's government in sympathy with Craig.

While William Craig's vision of an independent Ulster has repelled Faulkner it has attracted strange supporters. First, there is the Provisional IRA, whose leaders would readily accept an independent Ulster, provided it could be extended to all nine of the original counties of the province, taking in the three Ulster counties of Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan which were included in the Republican part of Ireland in 1920. Neither the people of the three counties, the government of the Irish Republic, the British, or even the majority of Unionists in Northern Ireland would ever agree to such an arrangement which would, in any case, be merely another partition of Ireland. Yet ridiculous though the Provisional IRA's vision of a new Ulster must seem to most sensible people, it has been "sympathetically considered" by the former Unionist cabinet minister, John Taylor, who has discussed it with Frank McManus, the pro-Provisional M.P. now representing Fermanagh and South Tyrone in the British House of Commons.

Second, Craig's independent Ulster seems to attract the SDLP, especially since Craig has hinted that within his new Ulster there may be an opportunity for the rep-

LETTERS *(Continued from page 418)*

my initial shock at the words attributed to him had worn off, I felt that simple justice demanded that I check whether he had actually referred to standards as "all that horse shit" which "might have been valid before, but not now," or whether he had actually replied to Sourian's own query about the need for students to have "traditional reading and writing skills" ("Don't they just plain have to be taught, if we're to be at all serious?") with the answer, "judgments made in life have nothing necessarily to do with language." I therefore called Dean Chavarria-Aguilar. He denied making these statements.

Again, what can I say? Dean Baskerville claims he didn't say what was attributed to him; Dean Chavarria-Aguilar claims he didn't say what was attributed to *him*. Apparently no one said anything. Yet I would swear that someone said something. . . .

L. G. Heller
Professor of Classical Languages and Hebrew
The City College of New York

New York City

DEAR SIRS: I feel I ought to respond to Professor Heller's letter as well as to the letter from Distinguished Prof. Edward Pessen [*The Nation*, Mar. 12] which states that I've "unfairly maligned" Prof. Howard Adelson.

I did not say that Adelson and Heller were "racist." What I did do was cite someone who ıd, in answer to a question. Furthermore, I attempted ın the article to place the attribution in its proper context. In doing so, I was not lying, as Professor Heller more or less implies. The important thing to me was to present viewpoints on a complex and sensitive situation and to let these viewpoints confront one another.

Professor Heller goes on to say that Dean Chavarria-Aguilar denies making the statements regarding academic standards which I attributed to him. Again, I quoted these statements *verbatim*, and maintain that I placed them in a reasonable approximation of their total original context.

As for my use of the word "pariah" in reference to Professors Adelson and Heller, I meant to suggest that there was apt to be something of a price paid by people who in their position vociferously questioned OAP at the time of its onset. Heller himself confirms this when he complains of the resistance to his promotion to full professor.

Peter Sourian

salute to Robeson

New York City

DEAR SIRS: On April 9, Paul Robeson will be 75 years old. Robeson, who won fame as an athlete, scholar, actor, singer and passionate fighter for the cause of black and other oppressed people during an active career that spanned nearly half a century, will be honored at a cultural salute, to be held at Carnegie Hall on Sunday afternoon, April 15.

Robeson, who is retired and in poor health, will not attend the Carnegie Hall affair, Paul Robeson, Jr. has said, but he will send a personal message. Prominent artists and public figures will participate in the program. Proceeds of the salute will be used to help establish the Paul Robeson Archives, a center for assembling, preserving and making available to scholars and the interested public a complete record of Robeson's life and work.

Robeson, one of the great bass baritones of musical history, was a major figure in the world of the concert stage, the motion picture and the legitimate stage for forty-five years. But he was more than that. He was a fighter for his people, a supporter of labor's struggles and a world-wide voice for peace. Robeson was the target of intense persecution because of his outspoken positions, and during the McCarthy period, he was denied a passport for eight years, thus sharply curtailing his ability to earn a living.

The script for the salute is being prepared by screen writer Walter Bernstein and novelist John Killens. Mr. Robeson has made available film footage and tape recordings of his voice in song and speech which will be incorporated into the program.

The committee is chaired by Hope Stevens, the treasurer is Alice Childress. In addition to Paul Robeson, Jr., other members are Harry Belafonte; Leon J. Davis, president of Local 1199, Drug and Hospital Union; Dizzy Gillespie; Lillian Hellman; Pete Seeger; Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard of the A.M.E. Zion Church; Cleveland Robinson, president of the Distributive Workers union, and Judge Charles W. Crockett of Detroit.

Paul Robeson Birthday Committee

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resentatives of the Catholic minority to share in the government. Therefore the SDLP, apparently willing to forget Craig's long record of anti-Catholic speechmaking, his organized violence against the civil rights movement when he was Northern Ireland's Minister of Home Affairs, and their own frequent demands that he be arrested for incitement, has actually taken part in talks about Ulster independence. Some extraordinary alliances are forming in Northern Ireland, among discredited politicians whose main concern, whatever side they represent, is to be restored to the positions they held before Stormont was abolished in March 1972.

Meanwhile, beyond the reach of the politicians and their ever changing alliances, the men of terror plan their campaigns of death and destruction, not deterred, on the IRA side, by the fact that their leaders are either imprisoned or in hiding from the police, both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. Bombings continue in Belfast, Derry and other cities and towns of Northern Ireland. They have spread to London, where one man was killed and 240 persons were injured on the day of the border poll. And every day in Northern Ireland someone falls victim to the sectarian murder gangs that range with apparent impunity, despite the tight security measures of the Ulster police and the British Army. The bodies of the unfortunate people who fall into the hands of these murderers are found in alleyways, locked in the luggage compartments of abandoned automobiles, on the sides of roadways, or on waste ground. Many have been kidnapped and then murdered; others have been shot down in the streets by gunmen in passing cars.

Within a matter of a few days in February, to give a typical example, a workman was killed and several of his workmates seriously injured when a Protestant terrorist tossed a hand grenade into the bus in which they were traveling; two post office workers coming off duty on a Sunday afternoon were shot dead as they were walking home; a busman was killed by terrorist bullets when he stopped his bus to let passengers get off; blood seeping from a parked car led the police to the body of a murdered man bundled in the back compartment. That is how the war of religion and politics is being fought in Northern Ireland. More than 100 people have been killed by the murder gangs—apart altogether from the soldiers shot by Republicans, Republicans and civilians shot by the British Army and the people killed by bombs—since Britain imposed direct rule on Northern Ireland exactly one year ago.

It is against this dark and depressing background that William Whitelaw and Edward Heath are preparing the White Paper in which they will outline their plans for the future government of Northern Ireland. □

BIRD-DOGGING THE EXECUTIVE

What Congress Could Do If It Tried

PETER GRUENSTEIN
Mr. Gruenstein, a free-lance writer on Washington, was formerly a legislative assistant to Rep. Les Aspin.

Washington

The hottest topic within the halls of Congress these days is how the legislature can reassert some control over the executive and restore a reasonable constitutional balance between the two branches. One of the proposals —and politically it is one of the most palatable—is a suggestion made by Ralph Nader's Congress Project, among others, that Congress dramatically increase its professional staff with a view to monitoring executive agencies much more closely and nipping in the bud executive waste, mismanagement and usurpation of Congressional authority.

The argument is that present Congressional resources are far too slender to keep adequate watch over the mammoth, sprawling, ever-increasing executive bureaucracy, with its thousands of programs and hundreds of thousands of employees. And especially is this so because members of Congress must also vote on hundreds of issues each session, respond to constituent problems, and generally mend fences back home. The argument is valid: even if every Congressman and every member of his staff were hard-working, intelligent and public-spirited, they would still be unable to submit the executive bureaucracy to the kind of incisive, persistent scrutiny it requires.

But the sad fact is that many Congressmen—probably most—fall far short of making the best use of resources now available to them. For example, each House member is allowed about $165,000 to hire up to sixteen staffers (Senators get more, the amount varying with the population of the state). At last count, however, one-third of the House members did not spend all of their staff allowances—apparently so that they could show the folks back home how zealously they pinch pennies, while careless or foolish billions go down the drain because no one in Congress has been able to unravel the complex and costly programs of the Pentagon and other agencies.

With $165,000, every legislator could have a staff that included three or four professionals. Even so, the total number of professional staff working for Congressmen and their committees would be incapable of monitoring all or most of the executive agencies (hence the wisdom of the suggestion by Nader's Congress Report), but each Congressman—even the most junior—has sufficient staff and other resources to concentrate on some segment of the bureaucracy. What is amazing is how many members of Congress can go through two years without say-

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ing one original word or doing one original thing. It is not reasonable to expect a member to police the whole of government, but it is reasonable to expect that he will select a couple of agencies, probably within the jurisdiction of the committees on which he serves, and there attempt to uncover waste, mismanagement, programs that need strengthening, and legislation that needs introducing. Far too many members of Congress leave that kind of tough investigating to reporters and to Congressional committees, which are themselves often severely understaffed.

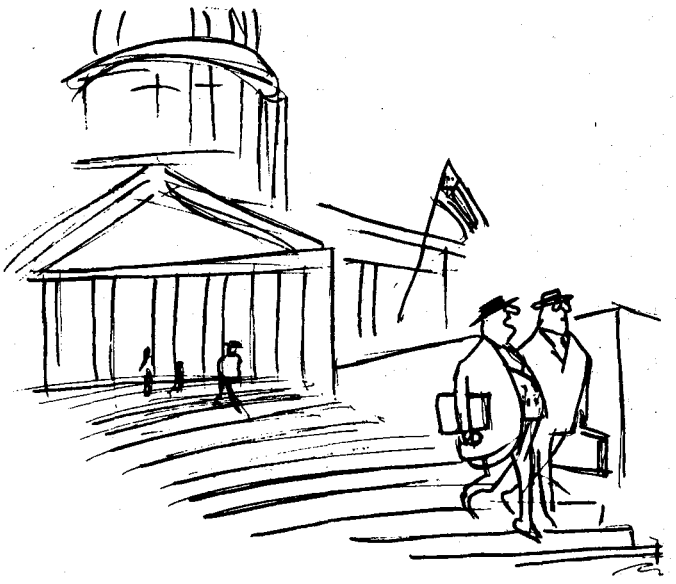
Beyond his own staff, the resources available to a Representative or Senator are impressive, and dwarf those generally available to a reporter; yet many Congressmen seem scarcely aware of them. The Library of Congress has a division called the Congressional Research Service; it employs hundreds of professional researchers who can provide Congressional offices with help ranging from basic fact gathering to intricate policy analyses. Then there are the Congressional committees and their staffs. These two resources are used, but not nearly enough.

The General Accounting Office—often described as the watchdog of Congress—is probably the most underemployed resource of all. The GAO issues reports and analyses on various federal programs and recommends ways to cut costs and increase efficiency. In addition to its own studies, it will handle any reasonable request from an individual member of Congress or committee to study a particular program or agency. Last year, Sen. William Proxmire of Wisconsin initiated 25 per cent of all GAO reports made at the request of Congressmen, and that figure tells a lot about both Mr. Proxmire and his fellow legislators.

There are also informal resources—lobbies, special-interest groups, research foundations such as the Brookings Institution, public-interest groups such as Common Cause and Ralph Nader's groups, scholars who have authority in particular areas, and reporters. Most scholars or groups are flattered when a Congressman's office comes to them for help, and the pity is that such requests are so infrequent.

Last, but far from least, are the men and women who work in the agencies that members of Congress should be monitoring. Federal agencies are filled with potential whistle blowers—civil servants who are aware of waste or mismanagement or have had a project killed for political reasons—who will tell what they know if they have confidence that they risk their jobs (anonymity is never a certainty) to some purpose. A few members of Congress, Senator Proxmire and Rep. Les Aspin, especially, have mobilized small armies of whistle blowers, particularly in the Pentagon. And if they exist in the Pentagon, they surely exist in other federal agencies as well.

The problem is that Congressmen and their aides are more apt to spend their time talking to secretaries and deputy and assistant secretaries—those whose very job it is to protect the agencies or departments for which they speak. The fun and glamour may be in talking to the top guys, but it is often the middle-level bureaucrat, if you can find him, whose motives will more closely coincide with those of an investigative Congressman. He may, for example, have spent six months devising a more efficient procurement procedure for the Defense Department, only to have it scuttled after several big defense contractors raised a howl. A Congressman's promise that he will expose an agency's action, and bring it directly to the attention of the agency's bosses, can be a powerful inducement to a conscientious civil servant.



Ross

"I Haven't Been Able to Look a Taxpayer in the Face Lately"

But good investigation does not depend entirely on whistle blowers. Shortly after Aspin came to Congress in 1971, a schoolboy in Kenosha, Wis., a city in Aspin's district, was killed in a school bus accident. Naturally enough, many Kenosha parents were upset and meetings were held to determine the cause of the crash and to discuss the general problem of school bus safety. Equally naturally, Aspin looked into legislation sponsored in Congress, assuming that he would find many school bus safety bills and could choose which among them to support and co-sponsor. He discovered, on the contrary, that though school busses were so shoddily built that some critics call them "the unsafest vehicles on the road," the Transportation Department had never prescribed design standards for their construction and no Congressman had introduced legislation to require DOT to promulgate such standards. When one considers that school bus safety is an issue as sure-fire as reverence for motherhood or respect for the flag, the fact that not one of the 535 members of Congress had taken it up was almost incredible, and entirely typical. (The school bus safety bill which Aspin subsequently introduced has been co-sponsored by more than eighty members of Congress, including the chairmen of the appropriate Senate committee and House subcommittee; it is given a good chance of passing the 93rd Congress.)

Noninvestigative Congressmen do not subscribe to any particular philosophy or belong to any one party.

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The interesting question is, given the considerable resources already available to them, why are so many Congressmen so slack?

I believe that several factors combine to produce the passivity:

(1) A Congressional seat, particularly a House seat, is a much more secure job than it is thought to be. In the 1972 general elections, only ten House incumbents who did not run against other incumbents lost their seats. The old saw that "You never get hurt by the speech you didn't give" is taken quite seriously by many Congressmen, and so is former Speaker Sam Rayburn's advice that "The best way to get along is to go along." In short, a member is under no pressure to do original or investigative work; and there is almost always some risk attached to being out in front on an issue.

(2) Some members of Congress and their staffers are lazy and some are not very bright, and good work requires a certain amount of energy and intelligence.

(3) Some members and staff like the political life too much. They enjoy the company of high Administration officials and party leaders; they are caught up in the trappings of the job, which are impressive indeed. They do not take the initiative, counting on people, lobbyists, other members and administration officials to come to them.

(4) Members of Congress are isolated. Even those who are inclined to dig into the affairs of an agency find the task very difficult. Each department has what is called a Congressional liaison office which, among other things, answers requests for information from Congressional offices. But, quite naturally, the primary purpose of these liaison offices is not to provide the member with information but to present the department in a favorable light. Members of Congress who do effective monitoring of departments and agencies soon find that these liaison offices are next to useless; the member's office must identify for itself the people within a department who may be of use. It is no easy task, considering the size of most departments and the fact that the member will get little help in locating the people he seeks. Members are isolated to the extent that they tend to get a preponderance of "official," sometimes propagandistic, information. To find out what is really happening requires skill and persistence.

(5) Some members badly allocate their resources. For example, a good many Congressmen keep their legislative assistants busy doing research on measures coming up for vote. Voting on issues is an important function (there were 328 votes in the 1972 session), and on the surface this appears to be a reasonable focus of energies. It is not. For one thing, objective and thorough analyses of upcoming votes are provided to Congressmen through such organizations as the liberal Democratic Study Group and the House Republican Conference. For another, on 90 per cent of votes, it is obvious from the beginning how the member will vote. Yet the civics textbook notion that a Congressman should be an expert on every bill that comes to the floor makes some Congressmen unable to do more than vote and tend to constituent problems.

Members of Congress and Congressional committees *do* need larger staffs and generally better resources if they are to monitor the executive branch and restore the constitutional balance. But it is perhaps more important that more members of Congress begin to see that bird-dogging the executive—and, in general, doing original work—is an essential part of their jobs, and that they must begin to devote a greater part of their present, quite considerable resources to it. Reforms are needed, but so is a renewed vigor in the composite body of Congress. □

THE SUPERCOST OF SUPERMARKETS

BRONTOSAURS IN THE FOOD CHAIN

JENNIFER CROSS
Mrs. Cross is a British free-lance journalist, now living in Santa Rosa, Calif. She is the author of The Supermarket Trap *(Indiana University Press).*

Coping with high food prices is rapidly becoming a national preoccupation, from the White House, which claims to have solutions for the problem, down to the corner supermarket or grocery store, where angry housewives face the weekly struggle to make ends meet.

One can only hope that the National Commission on Productivity's report on the food industry (due this month) will point a way out of the woods, for the industry's ills are more serious than the media would have us believe. By now almost everyone knows that farm prices are rising faster today than at any time since the Korean War, largely because bad weather and last summer's Russian wheat deal combined to send the price of wheat, feed grains, meat and poultry rocketing. What we should ask now is whether prices were not too high to begin with. More important, how much will they come down, if left to the "free market"? And if farm and wholesale prices drop when supplies improve, will the savings be passed on to consumers, or will they be swallowed up somewhere between the farm and the table? Will Phase III, and the Cost of Living Council, be able to insure this does not happen?

My own gloomy conclusion is that unless the public and its champions are prepared to fight, inflated food prices are here to stay. The food revolution, which has brought the average consumer such an abundance of produce for only 15.7 per cent of his take-home pay, is running out of steam. And the food industry is larded

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with fat, inefficiency and genteel profiteering—an indictment which applies not only to the jolly green giants but to our whole economic system.

I first reported on the industry's troubles in *The Nation* of September 19, 1966; today, many of them are worse. It has been a long time since supermarkets were innovative, competitive, low-cost food outlets. They are now lumbering, brontosaurean fossils, helping to *increase* food costs rather than reduce them.

Supermarkets have stopped growing, but they didn't stop in time. On average, they are too big for optimal efficiency, burdened on the outside by the expensive acreage of parking lots, particularly in suburbia, and inside by the need to stock 8,000 to 10,000 food and nonfood items. Caring for this monstrous inventory is one of the industry's worst problems, and new products keep coming: the net increase of births over deaths is several hundred a year. Since few of them sell at the decent rate of more than a case a week, stock movement—the key to profitable retailing—remains static at 12.5 per cent a year. Meanwhile, thanks to overbuilding, most supermarkets have a smaller clientele than they could efficiently and profitably serve. For much of the week they are mausoleums, coming to life only at weekends.

Employee morale is consequently poor. The National Commission on Productivity said in a release anticipating its report: "Turnover in stores covered in a recent Supermarket Institute survey averages 14 per cent a year among cashiers and exceeds 10 per cent per year among meat cutters. In addition to retraining cost when rapid turnover occurs, opportunities for productivity improvements are lost as well. Although the industry is concerned about employee motivation, they feel no single company can make the necessary investment to undertake the research and pilot studies which are needed." As in other retail businesses, disgruntled employees not only quit, they are liable to steal. Their pilfering is said to account for some half of the inventory shrinkage, estimated by food industry sources to be somewhere between $2.2 billion and $6.6 billion a year.

Meanwhile, supermarket overhead, ranging from packaging to utilities, rent to transportation, keeps zooming. Worse still, wages and fringe benefits went up 8.4 per cent last year, 73 per cent during the last decade; it is the single most expensive item involved in getting food from farm to table.

It is part of the American ethic that labor should be well paid. And the food chains, in particular, fear to pin too much blame on soaring labor costs, because it is bad public relations. Yet, many labor contracts throughout the whole industry are indecently padded wtih expensive and inefficient work rules. It makes no sense for highly paid meat cutters to do such donkey work as sweeping floors, sharpening knives and arranging sales counters. Or for drivers who make bread and milk deliveries to receive a 7-to-11 per cent "sales" commission, when they do no selling. Or for all Teamsters crews to work approximately the same hours, causing jam-ups at peak periods and idle freight cars the rest of the time. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz (admittedly somewhat anti-labor) commented: "It is amazing that we in America are as prosperous as we are in view of our efforts to restrict productivity." And the cost to consumers of such practices is about $400 million a year,' according to one Department of Commerce staff study.

With a few exceptions (like Lucky and Safeway), high labor costs, rising expenses and generally poor earnings are most noticeable in the biggest chains. The 1971-72 Cornell report, "Operating Results of Food Chains," finds that "The large-sized chains had the highest gross margin, 21.59 per cent of sales." They "had the lowest return on investment, 8.78 per cent, and the lowest operating profit (0.20 per cent of sales)." By contrast, small chains had the lowest gross margins (19.82 per cent of sales), the highest profits (1.12 per cent of sales), and a 14.23 per cent return on investment.

Unfortunately for consumers, the largest chains tend to set prices in the markets where they are dominant. Obviously, they set them high enough to at least stay in business, while the smaller or better managed chains follow the leader and pocket the balance.

At the manufacturing end there is less conclusive evidence that large companies are less efficient than small ones. In some areas, however, there appears to be a connection. The biggest meat-packing companies—Swift, Armour, Wilson—are less profitable than smaller firms in the $5 million-to-$25 million a year sales range, or such medium-large companies as Iowa Beef, American Beef Packers and Arizona-Colorado, all of which at least *doubled* their net profit in 1972. It may be more than a coincidence that four of the nation's largest meat packers have in recent years been swallowed up by conglomerates, Armour going to Greyhound, Cudahy to General Host, John Morrell to AMK Corp. and Wilson to Ling-Temco-Vought. Many other food companies (Continental Baking, the biggest in its line, is now part of ITT) have been similarly purchased.

Inadequate or biased financial reporting makes it hard to discover whether these "marriages" were for better or worse, but reports on conglomerates by the Federal Trade Commission and the House Antitrust subcommittee of the Judiciary suggest the latter. *Fortune* commented last year that the spectacular profit boom enjoyed by the top 500 companies may be coming to an end. "One possibility is that all the conglomerating, merging, and diversifying companies engaged in during the last decade or so simply failed to pay off. It also seems possible that a good many of the largest companies have exceeded the size at which their operations would yield optimum profits, i.e., that size increasingly involves *dis*economies of scale."

A few mergers now on the horizon involve issues of competition and higher prices which would obviously oppose the public interest. Among these are the proposed union of Iowa Beef and Missouri Beef [see "The Big Beef Merger," by James Rowen, *The Nation*, March 26], Pepsi-Cola and Rheingold, and Heublein and United Vintners, all the subjects of FTC complaints. A fourth possibility is the attempt by Gulf & Western to acquire 15 per cent of stock in the troubled Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., currently stalled in the New York federal appeals court.

When size leads to or is combined with a dominant

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or monopolistic position in a particular industry, the endless opportunities for profiteering, waste and inefficiency constitute a real though invisible addition to the nation's food bill. Last year, a controversial study by the FTC showed that consumers were overcharged a total of $15 billion a year by inefficiency and monopolistic or oligopolistic pricing in 100 manufacturing industries. The food industry's share, some $2.2 billion, is broken down in the following box:

Industry	*Cost of monopolistic pricing as % of sales*	*in $ million*
meat packing plants	3.10	483.9
fluid milk	3.28	256.7
soft drinks	7.31	247.8
animal feeds	4.20	201.5
beer	6.76	198.0
bread, baked goods	3.76	191.9
canned fruits & vegetables	4.14	143.6
candy	5.05	94.4
flour & grain mill products	3.60	88.5
liquor	6.47	88.3
glass containers	6.49	85.1
frozen fruits & vegetables	4.08	84.9
sanitary food containers	5.85	64.1
food products machinery	4.64	38.5

It is noticeable that the highest rates of overcharge, in terms of percentage of industry sales, occur in soft drinks, beer, liquor and glass containers; that supports the Federal Trade Commission's conclusion that industries dominated by a few firms make more, waste more, advertise more, and are then able to hide some excess profits through bookkeeping ploys.

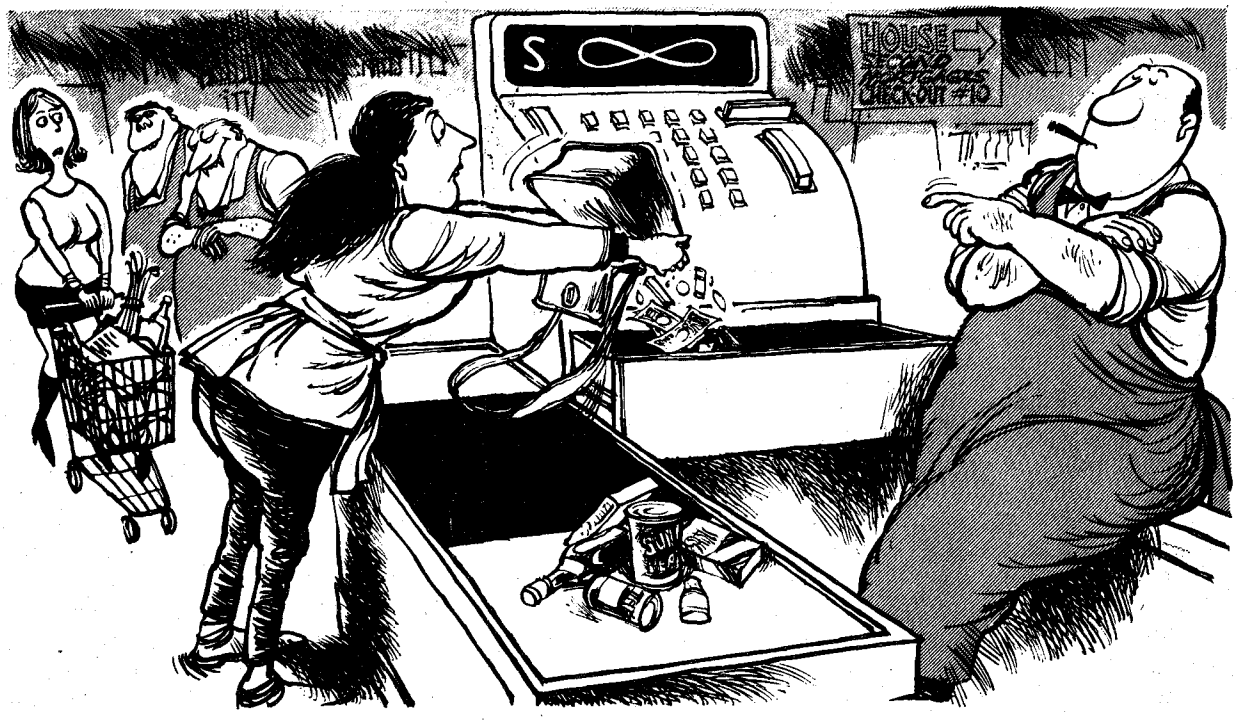
It is hard for the average person to understand how he has been stuck with a permanently inflated food bill. Here are some current examples of how it can happen:

Coca-Cola's franchise system grants exclusive territories to local bottlers, and allows them to set their own prices, thus substantially reducing competition. The FTC, which is now attacking the system, claims that the cost is an extra nickel a bottle, or $1.5 billion a year, on this and other soft drinks. The commission also charged Chock Full o'Nuts in New York City with another franchising abuse—price-fixing food sold in company restaurants, and requiring franchisees to buy much of their food and other supplies from the "company store."

Domination of the ready-to-eat cereal market by Kellogg, General Mills, General Foods and Quaker Oats has resulted in hefty prices for snap, crackle and pop, according to a third FTC complaint. The commission charges that this anti-competitive behavior has inflated both prices and profits.

Sometimes a whole industry gets such a grip on government that it can openly fix prices: that has happened with milk and liquor in many areas. "Fair trade" laws are probably only fair to the least efficient producer, certainly not to big, aggressive companies who pocket the profits, or to the consumer who pays the bill. In the case of milk, political support for such price-fixing costs a fair penny in slush money. Before the last election, industry groups distributed more than $606,000 in campaign contributions, thus greasing the wheels for another retail price increase (at least in California), ostensibly to cover higher feed costs.

And quite apart from these and other corporate practices, the food industry is shot through with waste and inefficiency. Here are some of the National Commission on Productivity's preliminary findings:



Oliphant, The Denver Post

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"More than 2,000 federal regulations are applicable to food. Many are repeated with variations by state and local jurisdictions. A single change by a single state in the ingredients that are required to be listed on a sausage label was estimated to cost an additional $75,000 annually to processors who shipped from out of state plants."

Packaging and handling leave much to be desired. "When a food item goes from farm to consumer, handling is time-consuming and expensive. A simple food like an orange is handled seventeen separate times from tree to table. Apples are packed in forty different shapes and sizes of containers, none of which fits the standard grocery shipping pallets. The 8,000 most common items in a supermarket warehouse are packaged in 2,650 different sizes. Standard packaging is slow in coming, however." And within the store, the myriad of different sizes has made comparison shopping so difficult that many chains are resorting to unit pricing to give consumers a break.

Other problems involve transportation.

> Virtually every grocery store in America is served from a grocery, produce or meat warehouse. Trucks often return empty to the warehouse from a store delivery even though they could conveniently pick up inbound shipments from manufacturers and processors for their warehouse.
>
> Establishment of faster and more reliable delivery schedules could improve the efficiency of growers' harvesting and loading of produce and provide higher quality, fresher fruits and vegetables to consumers.
>
> Although there has been a 40 per cent increase in rail shipping rates in the past five years, service has continued to decline. For example: in 1950 Bartlett pears arrived in New York from Sacramento six and a half days after shipment. They now arrive between eight and a half and eleven days after shipment.

Given the magnitude of these problems, it is easy to see how food prices may well be on a nonstop escalator. Marketing now accounts for 60 per cent of the public's food bill. It would have been still higher last year had not Phase II held down increases in the farm-retail spread to 2.9 per cent, which was less than the rise in either retail or farm prices.

Supermarkets, which carried most of the load, will undoubtedly use any latitude available under Phase III to make up for their miserably depressed profits in 1972. Keeping track of thousands of food items through all their handling stages will be an impossible task, particularly as there are no accurate, current studies of prices *and* profits. Supermarket pricing policies compound the problem: their constant changes, their "specials," which make price comparisons, and surveillance, a bookkeeper's nightmare.

Another danger is that high farm prices may be used as an excuse to try to fatten profits still further, especially in sections of the industry that are unusually depressed or inefficient. Supermarkets almost certainly pulled this trick in 1969 to widen their margins on meat. Now the bakers are trying the same thing, requesting a 2¢-to-3¢ increase on a loaf of bread, ostensibly to cover an increase in the cost of wheat. Labor, too, vows to get more than the 5.5 per cent wage increases allowed under Phase II. The new guidelines are sufficiently vague to make this a certainty (even George Meany, AFL-CIO president, says he is confused).

Government policy has concentrated on increasing the supply of agricultural commodities, particularly meat and feed grains. These efforts should show some results later this year, or by 1974, though continued heavy world demand for wheat and other grains make it unlikely that prices will drop much in the predictable future. The Administration is also recommending the phase-out of agricultural subsidies, which have little or no justification in these days when agri-business has almost devoured the small family farm, when farm profits are rising, and exports of meat and grains are booming.

The Cost of Living Council should be equally serious about improving efficiency and productivity within the industry. The giants will need encouragement, not to say jawboning, to improve handling and transportation; they will also need some assurance that collective arrangements—say, to set up joint shipments—will not run afoul of the antitrust laws. Wage contracts and collective bargaining require tough scrutiny; a splendid way to start would be to permit consumers a peek into the now closed conference rooms.

As a nation we need to look much more critically at the size, structure and operation of *all* of our large corporations. Tax reform would be a good beginning, both to see that the giants pay their fair share of federal income tax, and to remove the many tax incentives for conglomerates and other mergers.

It may well be our fate to remain dominated by huge, monopolistic or oligopolistic companies, and that it is idle to look for the breakup of General Foods or General Motors. But even *one* conspicuously successful antitrust case might help start a reverse trend. Right now, optimists at the FTC hope that the department's case against the four breakfast cereal companies could be such a landmark. If the FTC wins, it could lead to divestiture, among other things, but this case is bound to be hotly contested, and will take years to decide.

Consumers could help their own cause if they diverted the time and adrenalin now spent in grumbling to more careful food shopping, to getting *organized*, and getting on the phone to their Congressmen and Senators, now that food prices are becoming a political issue. They might, for example, support labor's pitch for controls on farm products, at least on a limited number of items to see whether the dreaded black market or rationing actually occurs. Meanwhile, they could take a strong stand on farm subsidies, and tax reform, refuse to exempt the soft drink industry's franchise system from the antitrust laws, and back Sen. William Proxmire's request for a six-months' freeze on wages, prices and profits. They should also turn a deaf ear to special industry groups who periodically come running to the government for a handout when times get hard. It wouldn't hurt to remind businessmen that once in a while they might be satisfied with a smaller profit, a fairer price, or even an occasional loss, and not expect the public to pay up as a matter of course. That, after all, is what the free enterprise system is supposed to be about. □

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POETRY IN TRANSLATION

Political Poetry: Dual Vision

GRACE SCHULMAN

This essay is the first of three projected special issues of *The Nation* devoted to an international forum on poetry, prepared by Grace Schulman, peotry editor.

An unsigned review of Whitman's *Drum Taps* in *The Nation*, Thursday, November 16, 1865, touches on matters that affect poetry in our time, when writers have a renewed consciousness of human suffering. Unmoved by Whitman's magic, unable to hear that new music, the reviewer wrote:

> Like hundreds of other good patriots, during the last four years, Mr. Walt Whitman has imagined that a certain amount of violent sympathy with the great deeds and sufferings of our soldiers, and of admiration for our national energy, together with a ready command of picturesque language, are sufficient inspiration for a poet. If this were the case, we had been a nation of poets. The constant developments of the war moved us continually to strong feeling and to strong expression of it.

A century later, it is plain that *Drum Taps* has a form that is tonal, one image suggesting another, the repetitions musical amplifications and variations that body forth an emotional unity. *The Nation*'s reviewer, however (Henry James at 22), objected to Whitman's seeming abandonment of structural devices ("Frequent capitals are the only marks of verse in Mr. Whitman's writing. . . . *Drum Taps* begins for all the world like verse and turns out to be arrant prose"). The critic asserted that "no triumph, however small, is won but through the exercise of art and . . . this volume is an offense against art."

More innocently, the reviewer confounded Whitman's powerful exaltation of the self with egocentricity:

> We find art, measure, grace, sneered at on every page, and nothing positive given us in their stead. To be positive . . . requires reason, labor and art; and art requires, above all things, a suppression of one's self, a subordination of one's self to an idea.

My reason for recalling that reading of *Drum Taps* is its relation to war poetry in our time. The reviewer was untouched by Whitman's use of the self as metaphor to permit discoveries on a deep psychic level, and a merging with all men and women. In *Drum Taps*, Whitman created a poetic form that would express his special awareness of agony and joy ("I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul, / O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear friend . . . I have been born of the same as the war was born").

Further, the reviewer of *Drum Taps* could not foresee that the modern awareness of destruction as an overwhelming feature of our experience might lead many poets to use harshly compassionate effects. At the extreme, a sense of social responsibility has caused writers to abandon metaphors and myths and to distrust any unique vision, whether or not it is subordinated to an idea.

Partly in consequence, two conflicting trends in modern poetry are fidelity to the self and anonymity. Paradoxically, individual integrity may take the form of concealing the self. At times writers vacillate between the extremes of individuality and its denial; at other times, that polarity provides a dialectic tension that enlivens poetry.

The need to move inward when writing of outward events is more pressing than ever. In their self-exploration, modern writers carry forward a tradition embodied in William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "All deities reside in the human breast." Recently Robert Bly, in an essay entitled "On Political Poetry," spoke of the need to probe the inner being:

> A good personal poem comes alive when the poet succeeds in carrying over some of his own psychic life into the poem, and entangling it in his language. . . . A true political poem is a quarrel with ourselves, as a personal poem is, and rhetoric is as pointless in that sort of poem as in the personal one. The true political poem does not order us either to take any specific act; like the personal poem, it moves to deepen awareness.

Reminiscent of Whitman's *Drum Taps*, that urge to examine the spiritual self as a means of reaching out to others characterizes some of the best political poems of the century, such as Cavafy's "Expecting the Barbarians" and Vallejo's poem beginning "There comes over me, sometimes, a feeling abundant, political. . . ."

It marks political poems of great power that are not as well known, such as the work of José Gomes Ferreira (born 1900). Some of his poems appear, translated by Jean R. Longland, in *Modern Poetry in Translation, 13/14*, an issue devoted to Portuguese writing. Of those, the most political are the most deeply personal:

INVASION XI

I opened my veins with my nails . . .

Then coldly
I raised my arms
inside me,
and with my hands dripping blood
I wrote on the Moon
these words of fire:

"Oh Ever-Defeated ones:
have the cruelty to defeat!"

And the Moon rose red
in the distant Cold
where only Death is a warm-handed
companion.

Moving inward to write of worldly things, Ferreira presents dreams in a succession of images that terrify for their immediacy; or, he makes real horror dreamlike, as in the following poem:

INVASION XVII

("After a heavy bombardment, the city of X was occupied by our troops.")

The general entered the city
to the sound of bugle and drum . . .

But why are there no flowers,
why does no cheering come?

Where are the crowds
to applaud him,
lining the street up and down?

What about this silence?
Did it fall from a lunar town?

Everywhere only the dead.

Dead on the trees, on the roofs,
in the cobbled streets, on the gratings,
on walls, in the sewers . . .

Dead decorating the balconies
with bloody bedspreads—
fringed with hands . . .

Dead on the eaves.
Dead in the clouds.

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Dead in the Sun.

And buildings covered with dead.
And the sky lined with the skin of the dead.
And the whole universe toppling corpses . . .

Hey! Get up from the gutters and come
running to applaud the general
who has just entered the city
to the sound of bugle and drum! . . .

One must go on feigning life.
And for an applauding crowd,
even the dead will do,
not weighted down by souls.

On the other hand, the increasing conflict between aesthetic commitment and human concern has caused poets of many nations to waver between individuality and self-denial. It often appears as if the greater an artist's revulsion from destruction, the stronger is his reluctance to indulge his personal perceptions. After the shattering experience of World War II, many poets have worked toward an imageless art, regarding the invention of metaphors and similes as self-indulgent. In the words of the politically committed Polish writer, Tadeusz Rózewicz,

MY POETRY

translates nothing
explains nothing
expresses nothing
embraces no totality
fulfills no hope . . .

(Translated by Karl Dedecius)

At its most severe, the poetry of modern horror is a poetry whose bareness of utterance recalls T. W. Adorno's saying that after Auschwitz poems can no longer be written. Poets pressed to a keen awareness of human misery have subordinated the music of poetry to argument and sacrificed the personal vision that informs their art. Among these poets, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, the West German translator of Williams, writes of a country "where the past rots and reeks in the rubbish disposal unit / and the future grits its false teeth."

And Alexandre O'Neill, of Portugal (born 1924), creates a poetry of scorn for personal idiosyncrasy:

And when you say 'Poetry' I feel sick
that violent sick feeling I get from
the furtive stare the casual intentness
of those who loiter in lavatories in cinemas
with distracted hands seeking for
the night's solution

(Translated by Jonathan Griffin)

The reaction against individuality, as well as against rhetorical devices, has grown more severe with each generation since around 1925. Reiner Kunze, at 39, writes with more severity than does his colleague, Peter Huchel, thirty years his senior, both represented in a new collection, *East German Poetry: An Anthology*, edited by Michael Hamburger. In Huchel's poem, "Wei Dun and the Old Masters," there is a dialectic tension between art and reality.

Marvelling at the old masters,
Who painted boulders as bones of the earth
and thin mists as the skin of hills,
I had tried, with vertical brush,
With quick strokes and slow ones,
To color the moist radiance of rain.

But as moon and sun shone
On land going more and more to ruin
It was not boulders that were the earth's bones—
Human bones were grinding in the sand
Where tanks ripped with guzzling tracks
Roads open to their gray marrow . . . .

(Translated by Christopher Middleton)

The younger man's poetry embodies the distrust of personal perceptions:

APOLOGY

A thing's a thing
sufficient to itself

Superfluous
the sign

Superfluous
the word

Three Poems by Peter Huchel

Translated by MICHAEL HAMBURGER

THE JUGGLERS HAVE GONE. Noiselessly
they followed the white water.
The ensign and the girl,
the hunchback merchant with chains and rings,
all have gone.
What remains is the hill
where they used to meet,
the oak, hugely forked,
in a green riot of treetops.

At noon,
amid the stone's warmth,
you hear organ strains
and a mask, mulberry-coloured,
is blown through the shrubs.

The oak, hugely forked,
that contained thunder—
in the trunk's dank interior
bats are asleep,
dragon-skinned.
The world-famous jugglers have gone.

OPHELIA

Later, next morning,
when the first white light glints,
the wading of gumboots
in shallow water,
the thumps of poles,
an order barked out,
they're hoisting the miry
barbed wire net.

No kingdom,
Ophelia,
where a scream
tunnels the water,
a spell
makes the bullet
shatter against a willow leaf.

ANSWER

Between two nights
the brief day.
What remains is the homestead.
And a trap the huntsman
set for us in the thicket.

The desert of noon.
Still it warms rock.
A chirping in the wind,
the whir of a guitar
down the slope.

The slow fuse
of withered foliage
glows on the wall.
Salt-white air.
Arrowheads of autumn,
migrating cranes.

In bright boughs
the stroke of the hour subsides.
On the clockwork
spiders lay
the veils of dead brides.

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(Superfluous
I)

(Translated by Michael Hamburger)

The question that remains luminous in my mind is how the Renaissance concept of the individual could have dwindled in that modern poetry of which Hopkins, Whitman and Baudelaire were progenitors. Since the mid-19th century, the poet's perception of experience has become a series of intense though fragmented impressions, his mode of inquiry related to what Erich Kahler described in *The Tower and the Abyss* as a new observational sensibility that emerged as a result of disordered sensations crowding the consciousness. The artist, seeking reality more coherent than ordinary perception of experience, transforms himself. In Rimbaud's famous *Lettres du Voyant, "Le Poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens."* (The poet makes himself a seer through a long, immense and deliberate derangement of all the senses.)

After the 19th century, an even more revolutionary change in sensibility occurred, altering the music and the imagery of poetry in the Western world. Its effects can be found in the wide range of masks used by Rilke, or Stefan George.

The lack of inner wholeness as he perceived it, led the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), to write in four different voices. Pessoa explored a multiple vision of reality by using the voices of himself and of three persons to whom he gave names. (His own name means "person.")* After around 1945, however, consciousness of human brutality became so acute, especially in European writers, that poetry of the person, however divided, was considered an impossible indulgence. Hence poetry of crisis involves inner fragmentation as well as outward disaster, the personal and political being inseparable.

Recently, while leafing through back issues of *The Nation*, I happened on two of the last political poems to assume the possibility of human nobility in the Renaissance tradition, in which the rightness of conduct took precedence over survival. They were "The Statues" and "Long-Legged Fly," by William Butler Yeats, composed shortly before he died, and collected in *Last Poems, 1936-1939*. The last stanza from "The Statues" embodies Yeats's aesthetic for dealing with contemporary reality:

When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side,
What stalked through the Post Office? What intellect,
What calculation, number, measurement, replied?
We Irish, born into that ancient sect
But thrown upon this filthy modern tide
And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,
Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace
The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.

Yeats's great political poems contain the juxtapositions of the unheroic, unplatonic realities with his poetical self, and the objective world with past nobility. Yeats's structures are built on those oppositions, such as blank verse struggling with conversational rhythms, contrasts in diction.

M. L. Rosenthal, one of the first critics to investigate those changes in the self that mark modernity, writes in *The New Poets* of war as going beyond theme into a condition of consciousness. In developing his theory of the alienated sensibility, Rosenthal had invented the phrase "confessional poetry" to describe Robert Lowell's use of self as an embodiment of American culture. "To build a great poem out of the predicament and horror of the lost

*Pessoa's work has been published recently in England. The pseudonyms—poetic selves to whom he gave names—are included in the title of the edition. *Fernando Pessoa*: I - Alberto Caeiro; II - Ricardo Reis; III - Alvaro de Campos; IV - Fernando Pessoa. Translated by Jonathan Griffin, Carcanet Press (Pin Farm, South Hinksey, Oxford).

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¶JUDGES will be four poets, whose names will be announced after the deadline for submissions.

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Self has been the recurrent effort of the most ambitious poetry of the last century," he wrote. As for the break in form, Rosenthal wrote of the personal and political crisis that led the Russian poet, Mayakovsky, to go beyond technique; his last poems embodied a cry, the speaking sensibility too small for life.

Another critic, Michael Hamburger, writes of the difficulty poets have had in integrating their poetic and social selves, and in accepting metaphor to explore a grim reality. Naming the new severity "anti-poetry," Hamburger writes: "Every modern poet worth reading contains an anti-poet, just as every modern anti-poet worth reading contains a Romantic-Symbolist poet. The wider and the more strongly charged the field of tension between them, the greater a poet's potentialities of achievement and progression."

That self-discovery, through the investigation of a destructive reality, urges the breakdown of poetic devices —and the invention of new forms— in the poetry of many nations. In his early work, Ted Hughes presents predatory animals as incarnations of bestial human behavior. Later, acutely conscious of human brutality, he creates the crow image as the inheritor of a destructive civilization, embodying a biting, barbed-wire harshness and a plain diction close to silence:

God tried to teach Crow how to talk.
'Love,' said God. 'Say, Love.'
Crow gaped, and the white shark
crashed into the sea
And went rolling downwards, discovering its own depth. . . .

Poets have exploited incantation and ritual to the same ends. Anyone who has heard Allen Ginsberg's hypnotic reading of his recent poem, "Hum Bomb" (collected in *The Fall of America*) may be aware of its passionate ritual pull; recently I watched him transform staid listeners, becoming gradually aware of their stamping feet, their swaying bodies:

Whom bomb?
We bomb them!
Whom bomb?
We bomb them!
Whom bomb?
We bomb them!
Whom bomb?
We bomb them!

In literary tradition, writers have embraced the very breakdown of language to suggest the disruption of social order. Dante's *Inferno*, for example, bodies forth a vision of godlessness and political discordance. In *Canto VII*, where Dante meets the souls of the sullen lying

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below mud, buried forever in the Styx, he hears them gurgling words of a chant that is a grotesque parody of a hymn: *"Papa Satán, Papa Satán, aleppy."*

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot's description of the richly furnished drawing room in which his lonely, neurotic woman sits, surrounded by sense-destroying artifacts, is presented in a long sentence whose syntax is dismembered. In Pound's *Cantos*, the chaos in society and in man is conveyed by an acervate technique, the piling up of sensuous details forcing attention to the thought process behind the presented images. Disorder is reinforced by the disruption of syntax:

Above the hell-rot
the great arse-hole,
broken with piles,
hanging stalactites,
greasy as sky over Westminster,
the invisible, many English,
the place lacking in interest,
last squalor, utter decrepitude . . . .

Lear's great words on the heath parodying justice are marked by repetitions and reiterations:

Get thee glass eyes
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.
Now, now, now, now.
Pull off my boots; harder, harder: so.

In our time, cold horror has generated an increasing grimness in poetry. It is difficult to believe, as Yeats did, in the poetic possibilities of noble deeds.

My closest acquaintance with heroism came when, after World War II, I heard my parents speak of a relative, a political prisoner, who leaped to her death from a tower in Eastern Europe, her sacrifice inspiring others in misery.

I remember her name: Helen. I remember her face in a sepia photograph, though I lose other faces of the time. Helen was an individual, for selfhood is the privilege of heroes.

Helen's act was iconic—a magnitude of beauty that draws the memory and imagination. Nor is that kind of courage unknown today as, for example, when the Greek students confronted the junta. But while I cannot forget Helen's marvelous act, I crave the kind of heroism that demands less an absolute knowledge of virtue than the steady choice of human rightness over time and among many alternatives.

Even as a child I realized that the sudden splendid act is not the greatest thing. Survival is. Patience is. Man living in peace, his external gods and battles gone, outwardly motionless, himself achieving a gradual excellence.

That new heroism, the art of survival, informs many contemporary poems with a dual vision alive to language and silence, individuality and commonalty, joy and suffering. For example, Paul Celan's

Thread-suns
above the gray-black wilderness.
A tree-
high thought
tunes in to light's pitch: there are
still songs to be sung on the other side
of mankind

(Translated by Michael Hamburger) □

Israeli Poetry—Carmi and Pagis

M. L. ROSENTHAL
Mr. Rosenthal is a teacher, critic and poet. His latest collection of verse is The View from the Peacock's Tail *(Oxford).*

An outsider coming to Israeli poetry for the first time will inevitably be tempted to see the obvious. He is going to see, more clearly and more crudely than an Israeli reader could do, the pressure of Jewish history and culture—the centuries in the Diaspora, the drama of the return, the horror of the holocaust, the Biblical resonance—on whatever he reads. It is a little like the foreigner's overriding consciousness, in reading Baudelaire, that this is an expression of *France*: something a Frenchman would naturally discount in weighing Baudelaire's or any other French poet's quality. But the discounting would be superficial only, a matter of balancing the whole experience. Ultimately, the historical, cultural, national relevance reveals itself sensitively only to intimates of a country's life and language. It reveals itself in a leap from the poem's fingertips to the nerve ends of such readers. It is not to be coded through a list of motifs and topics, such as may exist in a piece of writing that is itself dead and therefore uncommunicative.

We come to the poems of Dan Pagis and T. Carmi, in the present collection,* through the translations of Stephen Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell's problem has been enormous; no English version can show us the combinations of harshness and sweetness, and of tradition-deep allusiveness and abrupt colloquial immediacy, of the Hebrew originals. One small instance may suggest the character of the challenge to the translator. In line 6 of Carmi's "To the Pomegranate-Tree," a whole complex of association is involved with one simple visual effect because of the *sound* within which the effect is imbedded. The translator cannot begin to imply the connotations of the repeated Hebrew word *adóm* when it is rendered, properly, into the English *red.*

Go away. Scram.
Go to other eyes.
I wrote about you yesterday.

I said green
to your branches bowing in the wind,
and red—red—red—
to your fruit shining like dew.
I called light to your dank
obstinate root.

Now you don't exist.
Now you're blocking the day
and the moon that has not yet risen.

Come, beloved
(I wrote about you two days ago,
and your young memory
stings my hands like nettle),
come look at the strange pomegranate-tree:
its blood is in my veins, on my head,
on my hands,
and it is still planted in its place!

"In line 6," writes Harold Schimmel, "the threefold repetition *adóm adóm adóm* ('red red red') echoes the praise of the seraphim in the heavenly spheres: *kadósh, kadósh, kadósh* ('Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts') of the Hebrew prayerbook."* While the translator can often weave compensatory effects into the poem, we must nevertheless reconcile ourselves to the loss of such essential values as Mr. Schimmel describes. The Mitchell translation of "To the Pomegranate-Tree" does sustain Carmi's atmosphere of inspired though resistant celebration. It was impossible, though, to catch alive that splendid note that re-enacts, in a single line, Carmi's conversion of ritual adoration into a secular, aesthetic exaltation.

Still, translation is not the hopeless affair it seems in our saner moments. Look again at Mitchell's version. He has given us, after all, a window onto Carmi's poem, not only its incantatory imperiousness and wonder but its helpless quarrel with an overmastering symbol. The speaker had at

* Mr. Rosenthal's essay is the Introduction to the forthcoming British Penguin edition of these two poets.

* In Stanley Burnshaw, T. Carmi, and Ezra Spicehandler, eds., *The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 169.

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first thought the pomegranate-tree merely a source of vivid impressions. Now he sees it possessing his whole being. A striking turn of thought shows him summoning his new love to bear witness to this change. She too has begun to enter his existence in the same way as the tree. The erotic is thus, casually but powerfully, brought into the process the poem describes. Carmi's preoccupation is with the way passionately regarded external reality invades his own very nature. Like an Israeli Lawrence, this poet has his pomegranate personify a world of fierce knowledge, blood-drenched, sexual and intractable.

Read one way, the poem is clearly touched with the tragic awareness of modern Israel (its possession by a landscape and a history which it wished only to use for its own creative purpose), but only if we do not labor the point. With most of Carmi's work, indeed, we do better to wait for him to spell out this side of things, in his own usually subtle way. Poems like "Memorial Day, 1969" and "A View of Jerusalem" speak explicitly and elegiacally of Israel's griefs and terrors, but such poems make up only a small fraction of his writing. Dan Pagis, on the other hand, is centrally engaged with those griefs and terrors and with a prophetic vision related to them. His full strength is realized in his somewhat Yeatsian poem of coming universal catastrophe, "The Beginning":

In the ice-filled chaos before the end of creation,
distant fleets of steel are waiting.
Boundaries, in secret, mark themselves.
High above the smoke and the odor of fat and skins hovers
a yellow magnetic stain.
Oblique rays at the pole, alert, quick-eyed,
search for the signal. The code is cracked.
Now that all is prepared for darkness,
a wind, with savage fury, from the horizon, blows
in the hollow bones of mountains,
and at the zero-hour
the Great Bear, blazing, strides forth
in heat. The heavens stand now,
and the earth, and all their hosts.
A time of war.

Despite the grandeur of this vision, its terror is of almost pathological proportions. Chaos resolves itself in a violence all the more frightful because it makes murderous technology a function of the life principle reduced to mere savagery. "The odor of fat and skins" that recalls the German concentration camps becomes but a detail in the universal readiness for the coming "end of creation."

Pagis lives with the memory of annihilation as something he has both experienced and, of course, been spared. In early adolescence he was a prisoner in a concentration camp in the Ukraine; he escaped in 1944. The past will not hold still in his poems, which cannot help assuming it must return again. They are colored, too, by guilt at having survived. This guilt is expressed, not through self-castigation but through a rueful sense of unearned reprieve, neither undesired nor completely welcomed either:

Ready for parting, as if my back were turned,
I see my dead come toward me, transparent and breathing.
I do not accept:
one walk around the square, one rain,
and I am another, with imperfect rims, like clouds.
Gray in the passing town, passing and glad,
among transitory streetlamps,
wearing my strangeness like a coat, I am free to stand. . . .

("Ready for Parting")

Pagis is a poet of survival. He is comparable to Zbigniew Herbert and other Eastern European poets who write out of memories of the concentration camps and the Resistance. But he does not resort to their anti-rhetoric, their almost deadpan restraint. Pagis and other Israeli poets have certainly been affected by the reaction against overt emotionalism in the wake of a violence to the human spirit that no verbal violence could match. It is as clear to them as to anyone else that the unspeakable cannot be spoken even though the unbearable has to be borne, and they too have often mastered an astringent and ironic style. At the same time they have not had the paralyzing political experience, leading to spiritual isolation, of moving from one kind of brutal repression directly into another. An ultimately humanistic and even romantic affirmation is implicit in Israeli thought and life. As Pagis' "The Beginning" has shown us, this affirmation is anything but a sentimentally optimistic one. It is tragic in character, an affirmation of human meanings however disastrous the human predicament.

"The Beginning" is a total mobilization of Pagis' tragic and prophetic vision. He does not, though, devote himself exclusively to the apocalyptic, and I would not wish to discount his simple humanity. We can see it in a quietly compassionate and plainspoken poem such as "Moments of Old Age" and again in a mockingly tender poem such as "Europe, Late"—a repossession

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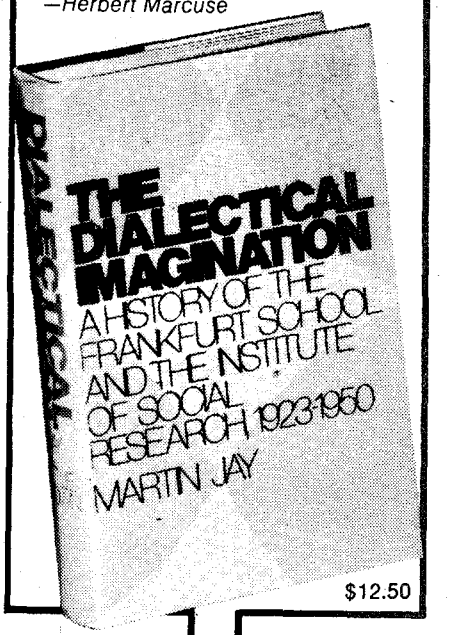
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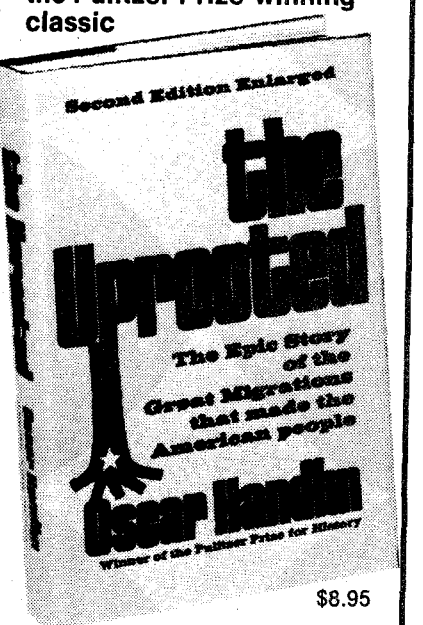
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of that moment when too many people still ignored what was upon them and clung to the illusion that "everything will be all right." Pagis unites his prophetic and his colloquial voices in the remarkable poem called "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car." The title itself would seem to make anything that follows in the poem anticlimactic. It isn't:

here in this carload
i am eve
with abel my son
if you see my other son
cain son of man
tell him i

Despite one's first impression, the poem's actual power soon shows itself. Partly this is a matter of the sepulchral force of the Hebrew, the sonorous authority of the primal Biblical names. Partly it is the projected realization of the unspeakable. Sacred text and secular understanding both prove inarticulate before the literal situation commemorated in the title. Eve's thought cannot be completed; identity cannot go beyond the naming of names. The tension between title and poem is between two determinants of Jewish and, by extension, all human consciousness. The poem calls up the implications of an ancient myth whose full meaning, and whose inadequacy to account for our condition, could not be grasped until our own day.

To write something as crucially relevant and at the same time as brilliantly compressed as this poem may be a matter of inspired luck. The result is almost nonverbal, a breathing archetype. Pagis has projected names and phrases as pigments of bitter consciousness. Or, to change the metaphor, they are acts of invocation that conjure up archaic guilt echoing undiminished into our own moment. He gives us no other poem as physical in its utterance as this one, in which immediacy and traditional resonance ring out as a single clang of feeling. But three of his short poems ("The Roll Call," "Testimony" and "Instructions for Crossing the Border"—separate poems with a shared frame of reference) and one longer poem ("Footprints") have a different and more characteristic sort of success. Literal data of the holocaust appear in these poems too, but their stress is on the begrudging acceptance of survival by one whose real destiny, as it were, was to have been killed as one of the 6 million. A sense of unreality, almost yet not quite fantasy, is inseparable from being oneself. The thinking in these poems is necessarily metaphorical and paradoxical, and so the poet's idiosyn-

Poems by Osip Mandelstam

Translated by W. S. MERWIN & CLARENCE BROWN

Now I'm in the spider-web of light.
The people with all the shadows of their hair
need light and the pale blue air
and bread, and snow from the peak of Elbrus.

And there's no one I can ask about it.
Alone, where would I look?
These clear stones weeping themselves
come from no mountains of ours.

The people need poetry that will be their own secret
to keep them awake forever,
and bathe them in the bright-haired wave
of its breathing.

January 19, 1937; Voronezh

I hear, I hear the first ice
rustling under the bridges,
and I think of drunkenness swimming
radiant above our heads.

From stagnant stairs, from squares
flanked with jagged palaces
Dante's exhausted lips
more resonantly sang
his circling Florence.

So my shade with its eyes
gnaws the grains of that granite
and at night sees a hill of logs
that by day had seemed to be houses.

My shade twirls its thumbs, or yawns,
when there's no one but us,

or it kicks up a din, in company,
warmed by their wine and their sky,

and flings sour bread
to the importunate swans.

January 21-22, 1937; Voronezh

I sing from a wet throat and a dry soul,
vision properly moist, a mind behaving itself.
Is wine good for a man? Are furs
and the blood heaving with all that is Colchis?
But something is clenched in my chest. There's a hush there. No language.
It's no longer me singing, it's my breath.
And my hearing's sheathed in a mountain. My head is deaf.

A selfless song is its own praise.
A comfort for friends, and for enemies, pitch.

A selfless song growing out of moss,
the one-voiced gift from the hunter's life,
which they sing riding the heights on horses,
with breath honest and open,
in honor and sternness caring only
to bring the young pair sinless to their wedding.

February 8, 1937; Voronezh

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cratic personality and imagination are brought fully into play.

The three shorter poems present the survivor as an "imaginary man," one who does not appear at the "roll call" in heaven and who is therefore a "mistake." He should be deleted from the records, his eyes "turned off," his shadow "erased." At best, he was made by a "different creator" from the others and remains curiously unsubstantial:

And he in his mercy left nothing of me
that would die.
And I fled to him, rose weightless, blue,
forgiving—I would even say: apologizing—,
Smoke to omnipotent smoke
without image or likeness.
("Testimony")

Rueful at having avoided annihilation, the "imaginary man" is at once "not allowed to remember" and "not allowed to forget." The long poem "Footprints" grounds all the paradox and half-fantasy in its literal and personal source, the memory of the time of the "unloading of the cattle-cars" when the speaker was somehow spared:

It's true, I was a mistake, I was forgotten
in the sealed car, my body tied up
in the sack of life. . . .

"Footprints" is a difficult poem. It moves within an ambience of opposed states of existence: escape from death into other-worldly life, and then return once more to the dangerous, death-ridden life of this world. As in the three shorter pieces, Pagis employs an imagery of ambiguous existence in the form of a cloud that moves mysteriously from one state and level of being to another. For instance, the smoke from the bodies cremated alive in the gas ovens is an image that blends into the cloud-phase of the speaker's existence. This imagery is intermingled with a birth imagery sometimes reminiscent of Dylan Thomas' (there are some real affinities between these two poets), with impressions of an imagined realm where seraphim move, and with harshly cruel axe-strokes of realism based on Nazi atrocities. The feeling that this mixture produces is a combined helpless anger, self-directed sarcasm and visionary buoyancy. The poem moves through recollection of despair and utter moral confusion and anomie to a widened view of desolation in the very heavens and then back to something like acceptance of the world's realities without fatuousness or illusion—

against my will guessing that it's very near,
inside, imprisoned by hopes, there flickers
this ball of the earth,
scarred, covered with footprints.

Too rich for easy summary, the poem proliferates points of reference that sometimes appear as unrelated as the couplets of a *ghazal*. But they do form a complexly unified whole, whose volatile, dynamic, humor-splashed shiftings make this the most rewarding poem by Pagis in the present collection.

Carmi's work hardly ever touches, directly, the nerve of burning historical memory and chagrin that Pagis' does. Indirectly, though, a number of his poems reveal the two poets' reciprocal concerns. Carmi's "Examination of Conscience Before Going to Sleep" is dedicated, rather pointedly, to Pagis, as though through it Carmi was making reference to a continued friendly debate about the function of poetry. The "examination of conscience" referred to has no connection, on the surface, with great historical events. It is about a small bird killed by an automobile on the street, passed over by speeding truck drivers, and at last kicked into the gutter by a pedestrian. Carmi gives us a sharply drawn vignette of the scene—the people, the sounds, the work going on all around, "all . . . in broad daylight." The poem ends:

I suppose the bird
is still there, clinging
to the gutter's edge.
I note it among the things
I should forget.

The reverberations of this unpretentious poem are greater than Carmi pretends. It assumes responsibility for what the speaker could hardly have helped, and finds a challenge to conscience in any living being that has been destroyed while oneself has survived. A comparable reverberation arises from Carmi's tiny sequence of two poems called "Landscapes." The landscapes are views from a moving train. The first is a charming contemplation of the poetic problem of selecting focal points from among the innumerable, apparently trivial details dancing before the eye. The poet makes a necessarily arbitrary decision to use one such detail only, the "white bird over a green river" with which the poem begins. Yet even this one detail at once splits up into smaller elements, and so the choice must be narrowed even further:

In fact, I think I'll note
just one bird.
Maybe just its wings.

The pathetic bird of "Examination of Conscience Before Going to Sleep" need not come to mind here, but there *is* a relationship. Carmi's method of structuring his poem engages him with

Crimes of Passion: The Slasher

What I like most is when
the hemline rises
& they place the high heel,
usually the right,
onto the first step of the bus,
then, they grasp the small
rod, & pull themselves up.
The nylons flare
like hot butter, & as that
thigh bulges slightly, & then
taut, I gently nudge her
& with the razor blade, one side
taped, as if a finger
were lovingly running from
the back
of the knee toward the buttocks.
She will sometimes turn & smile,
feeling some part of herself
freed,
only hours later does she learn
how deep my passion runs,
the thick blood of birth
drips silently
to some cold floor,
& in that pool, my face returns
the wonderful smile, & then,
I think,
she probably screams. She
will dream of me,
& that is all
anyone can ever ask.

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the fundamental aesthetic principle that everything involves everything else, that —as William Carlos Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow" has it—"so much depends" on the implied relationship of sensations and perceptions. He moves from "a white bird over a green river" to other birds seen in other places, and then to the bushes along the tracks, and then to the whole chaotic mass of things, all the roofs and clouds and blades of grass:

hard to count from a train,
so I won't mention them. . . .

But of course he *has* mentioned them. And so, when he returns to the one bird, or at any rate "just its wings," the whole of life, including the human life that created—and dwells under—the roofs that he sees from the train, has been concentered in the one arbitrarily chosen detail of focus.

If it stood alone, the first "Landscape" would suggest the richness of life rather than its sufferings or our existential guilt at all the pain and death we can do nothing to prevent. The second "Landscape" alters the case completely. The view glimpsed from the train this time is of a man working with a saw at the top of a tree. Suddenly the passenger sees the man, face contorted with terror and body twisting helplessly, slip and fall. The tone and perspective at the end both parody and deepen the ending of the first "Landscape." Though Carmi's literal subject remains far different, these closing lines bring us sharply into the world where Pagis' poetry moves:

All this I saw
from the window of a train,
after a green meadow
and before a team of horses.
I note only the fact
of his falling.
I didn't hear
the scream.

Whether or not so intended, this poem "justifies" Carmi's natural preference for writing a purely lyrical poetry. It suggests what "Examination of Conscience Before Going to Sleep" states explicitly: the hideous realities that the mind, whatever its state of empathy or level of consciousness, is always to some degree at least burdened with. In other poems, often, the only sign of such a burden is a melancholy shading of tone as the speaker pursues an elusive notion or feeling—the "tears from the depth of some divine despair" that are so distinguishing a mark of the lyrical tradition, East or West. One such poem is "Somebody Like You," about the difficulty of discovering the true mind of a sleeping child. Another is "No News," about a moment of unexpectedly felt emptiness in the midst of deep and lonely meditation. Carmi's love poems, too, depend for their intensity of feeling on a sense of loss and guilt as well as on their exploration of the subjective meaning of passion. These poems, especially "The Sacrifice," "The Claim" and "Those Who Go on Voyages," are not self-lacerating in the manner of Lowell or Plath. They plunge, rather, into the actual sense of an infinitely valued personal unfolding within an experience. But each experience has had its cost which must be explored as well, in the same way that the train ride of "Landscapes" exacted its emotional expenditure.

Carmi's finely responsive and resilient sensibility stamps his poems with pervasive anticipation of discovery. They are magnetically engaging. A poem like "Through the Windows" is an absolutely delightful composition of lights and darks and touches of sound. A poem like "Girl in the Closet" is touching and sympathetic and yet "heartless"—"simple and faithless"—in the age-old sense of the poet as objective observer of his own emotional relationships. Carmi has an elegant, intimate disinterestedness that is the obverse side of his capacity for empathy. He is one of those who, in the midst of tragic life, themselves committed to humane loyalties, yet insist on savoring whatever life genuinely has to offer.

I have perhaps not given enough attention to some parallel qualities of Pagis. Certainly his poetry does not exist at a lower level of "purity"—that is, of poetic rigor—than Carmi's. His expressed concerns are more drastic, usually. He succeeds very well in making a singing poetry out of the materials of disaster and in getting beyond the clichés of politics and of a Spenglerian portentousness to which he might be prone. When he turns away from historical and prophetic concerns, the tone is usually still drastic. Often, as in "Snake" and "Already" and many other poems, he has the same doom-driven dismay that we find in Dylan Thomas. He too is obsessed with the knowledge that death rides hard on the heels of birth, and that we are hurried irresistibly through the process by the force that through the green fuse drives the flower. Carmi's dead bird in the gutter and his man falling from the tree are equally victims of this pressing force of natural change, but Pagis is far more taken up with the indignity of our condition, the fact that we are quick-marched through life's changes before we can even think to get anything in order. Even when Pagis' poems are abstractly metaphysical in character, as in "Final Examination" or in the beautiful "Twelve Faces of the Emerald" (in which he comes closer than anywhere else to a purely image-centered technique), they remain challenges to reality by an armed and uncompromising sensibility. But sometimes, as in "Come" or "Seashell," Pagis shows himself a mystic of the same sensed awareness as I have attributed to Carmi. An urgent desire—a lust—to isolate spiritual resources that will make us as strong as possible in the face of history's savage blows, while we remain responsively open to the reality and the creative possibilities within it, may be endemic to the modern mind. If so, these two Israeli poets are compellingly accurate spokesmen for that mind, as well as for their own country's special and precarious poise and for their own very individual natures. □

Italy: Post-Historic Consciousness

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF LUCIO PICCOLO. *Translated and edited by Brian Swann and Ruth Feldman. Princeton University Press. 205 pp. $8.50.*

JOSEPH CARY
Mr. Cary teaches English at the University of Connecticut. He is the author of Three Modern Italian Poets: Saba, Ungaretti, Montale *(New York University Press).*

It would be sad if mere lack of "name" were to keep this poetry still secret from us. At any rate we cannot now blame either its language or its unavailability: Piccolo's complete poems are here brought over from their dense, involute Italian into a splendidly loyal English by Brian Swann and Ruth Feldman. Princeton University Press has mounted it all handsomely with originals and translations *en face*; there are informative and intelligent introductory essays by Glauco Cambon and—in his historical role of original introducer—Eugenio Montale.

The poetry of the Sicilian *barone* Lucio Piccolo was in effect a secret to all but his family and a few friends until 1954, when he chose to send Montale a small number of lyrics. In the accompanying letter he spoke of his

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wish to evoke and interpret from his childhood memories "a unique Sicilian world . . . that world of baroque churches, old convents, of souls suited to these places . . ." and Montale was sufficiently moved by what he read to undertake presenting the presumedly youthful poet at a writers' congress to be held that same year. He, and later the assembled *literati*, expected—in the matchless words of *Paris-Match*—an "*éphèbe en blue jeans*"; they found instead an "El Greco figure," a reserved and courtly personage in his 53rd year, garbed in austere Sicilian black, accompanied by a watchful manservant and an elder cousin with the title of the Prince of Lampedusa who would return home from this brief excursion to the literary mainland to begin his own evocation of a "unique Sicilian world" in the famous *Leopard*. And so it came to pass that Montale discovered himself sponsor not only to an unpublished poet of indubitable talent but to a distinguished man a mere five years his junior, "an accomplished musician, a student of philosophy, a trained Greek scholar, knowledgeable in the entire field of European poetry. . . . In short . . . confronted by a savant so learned and well-informed that the idea of having to present him embarrassed me immeasurably." The upshot of this sensation was the publication of the first and thickest of Piccolo's slim volumes in 1956; two others followed before his death in 1969.

Thus, for a very brief moment, Lucio Piccolo emerged from his Sicily into what is called the wide world and, before disappearing for good, deposited his poems. From the viewpoint of the wide world this must be regarded as an exemplary tale of long patience leading to final success and happy ending; we have no way of knowing how it might have seemed to Piccolo. It is possible to view him in a photograph that illustrates his cousin's pastoral memoir, *Places of My Infancy*: between Lampedusa and Lampedusa's adopted son he sits, burly as a professional wrestler, wearing mourning in the lapel of his well-cut suit, a leashed terrier on his crossed knee, squinting out at us in a patient surmise, a tough nut as inscrutable as the proverbial Chinese he faintly recalls. We know nothing of the life he lived on a remote estate on the north Sicilian coast except what is in the poems (but the poems are not very helpful in this historical-biographical respect). We have no indication as to how or when the bulk of them were composed, though Cambon very reasonably argues that their quality implies "decades" of writing and revising. Most of all we know nothing about that extraordinary moment of self-judgment in Piccolo's life when he found himself prepared to mail off certain lyrics to a master he had never met. We cannot talk very sensibly, then, about his development as a poet—where he had come from, where (at his age) he was going. Simply: a body of work, effectively without a past, makes its presence felt.

For Lampedusa, the Sicily of childhood was paradise lost: "Everyone was good to me—I was king of home." But Piccolo's cover letter to Montale, which seems to announce some sort of verse equivalent to either his cousin's idyllic manner in the memoir or the ironic lucidity of the historical perspective which would make *The Leopard* so notable, is genuinely misleading. While a lifetime's memories of Sicilian times and places have evidently supplied the raw material, the poems themselves are not usefully described as either regional, historical or autobiographical in tendency. It is the uneasy-making absence of such familiar perspectives—readers' guides—that can make a first encounter with them "difficult."

In his introduction Glauco Cambon offers the phrase "post-historical consciousness" as a way of characterizing Piccolo's poetic world: "a world where everything [has] already happened long ago, where history can only regress to folklore, shadow, sorcery." Montale, earlier, had spoken of a "Husserlian theme," i.e., "the contradiction between a universe changing but concrete, real, and a self, absolute but unreal because it lacks tangibility." And Swann and Feldman in their translators' introduction find Piccolo's presentation of consciousness comparable to Nabokov's effort to catch "the Texture of Time" in *Ada*; they also allude to his Roethkean "shift of things." What these accountings seem to have in common is a recognition of the dynamic or kinetic energy charging these poems: things throng and jostle and displace one another; objects, figures, fragmentary scenes are summoned up and darkly uttered as in an ecstatic roll call; nothing stands still. One could do worse than adduce, slightly amended, Pound's description of the vorticist poem in *Gaudier-Brzeska*: "It is a radiant node or cluster . . . from which, and through which, and into which, [images] are constantly rushing. In decency one can only call it a VORTEX." This seems a satisfactory prognostication of Piccolo.

Perspective, meant to provide some scale or measure, to mark some pattern or design, requires a relatively stable point to proceed from. In Piccolo that point is neither spatial nor temporal, neither "Sicilian" nor "elegiac." I think it might be best described as a consistently esoteric mode of perception. His world is exclusively haunted. The poems are the expression of a weird, retired "eternity" where horizon and sandglass are nonexistent and all things coexist; there is always a sensation of occult pressure and "vortex." In the *Collected Poems*, this consciousness has found its haunting lyric expression, as in the opening poem, "Hide and Seek":

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Three Italian Poets

Translated by RUTH FELDMAN & BRIAN SWANN

THIRST

Where even shade is bleached
by the glare that leaps onto it
certain anise freshness
light blue of shutters
ceramic of tiles
glass of soft-drink bottles
painted crusts strewn
in the boiling desert
are clear signs
of dazzling thirst
drops from the fountain.

Bartolo Cattafi

YOUR TABLE

Your table laid for a feast
with its cloth convulsed by the wind
the window open
on the great storm
and the host sitting at the table's head
knife in hand

Bartolo Cattafi

CHOICE

I was apart
in silence
when you chose the islands
and the open sea.
What did you go to meet
with your choice
on glazed tiles
in long corridors
in the creaking doors
in the wind's lament
in the fragments of a blue glass
fallen from the window?

Bartolo Cattafi

GESTURE

It isn't true that nothing happened
when you pulled your hand out of your pocket
and with your arm extended sliced the air
from left to right
from high to low
what happened was that with your outstretched arm
you sliced the air
and that had its impact
the air isn't the way it was before
it's sliced

Bartolo Cattafi

BEHOLD THE THIN GREEN . . .

Behold the thin green
of ribbons and geraniums
declining at the thunder and tears
tears at the dimmed panes;

Behold the scant downpour
behold the lost hour
behold the lilywhite flash
that has revealed you.

Ribbons torn from the void,
icy bare sheets,
steep piazza that at the sign
of your love opens,

ribbons and quick flashes
and you, lily-like life,
you, face, where
a mild evening prevails,

you, face, in which the rain
dies down uncertain,
bends to oblivion the exhausted
earth offered to the whirlwind,

you—bend me to trusting
darkness, to your silence.

Andrea Zanzotto

IT WAS NOT AS YOU THOUGHT

It was not as you thought the outburst
of the previous day that shook the frail
and over-sensitive plant—
tears were endured for another reason:
perhaps the reborn echo
of a sad tale,
but certainly in me
opened the tremendous and humble
voice that has always existed
and that binds us, each of us,
to the sorrow of each, however unknown.

Then calm and rest come
in the shelter of you. On the sand
wave after wave the far sea
perhaps sounds one night
when from the depths
upon the shifting plain
re-emerge the fugitive lights of treasures
which flotillas sailing to hopes
of the Happy Isles
scattered on the waters.

Lucio Piccolo

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When the game starts, when it ends
we don't know, perhaps
it was day . . . except there's little
difference inside or out.
inside over the weft of passages,
corridors, staircases, outside
among the mists of submerged
day and moonshreds;
a measure flexible and strong
quick and cautious has seized us, carries us
up great flights of stairs,
and weightless away. . . .

This strange poet has been superbly served by his translators. Swann and Feldman have accomplished what they hoped they might: that is, they have produced English poems "comparable to the original, speaking with power in another tongue." □

The Lord Is Fact

FINDING THE CENTER: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians. *Translated by Dennis Tedlock. The Dial Press. 321 pp. $8.50. Paper $2.95.*

JOHN PECK
Mr. Peck is the author of Shagbark, *a book of poems (Bobbs-Merrill).*

Of the tribes whose cosmology, ritual and oral tradition have been studied thoroughly, the Zuni of the Southwest—the Aashiwi, as they name themselves—are among the most prominent. It is remarkable, then, that Dennis Tedlock's splendid translations of ten tales from the Zuni represent the first fresh gathering of Zuni narrative material (he recorded 100) since the work of the 1930s Boasians, Ruth Benedict and Ruth Bunzel. But Tedlock's versions represent a great deal more, and mark nothing less than an epoch in translation by anthropologists.

If the Boasians exercised great professional care—avoiding, for instance, the late Victorian patinas, alterations and interpolations of Frank Cushing—they nonetheless practiced distortions, largely as a consequence of their methods. Having to rely on laborious dictation, they could not catch, much less represent, the full character of oral performance. In fact, their necessary interruptions interfered with that performance, eradicating parallelism and repetition, and isolating the narrator from his native audience. Then, both texts and translations were cast as prose, some of it awkward; and there the state of the art has remained, until now.

Tedlock came to see that the "prose" was not prose at all, but instead language in a rich oral tradition closer—if we must have analogies—to the Yugoslav epic narratives studied earlier in this century by Albert Lord. His tape recorder let him see that, but also his linguistic competence and patience, the presence of a native audience, and an ear educated by recent American prosody. Tedlock has represented pauses in the Zuni with line and strophe breaks, and degrees of pitch and intensity with a handful of standard typographic devices. The text that results is one that we recognize, of course, as poetry scored for voicing; but we also recognize—and this is the kingpin—that an oral tradition has emerged in its own proper character. For the lord is fact, inalienable and complex fact; and worth, as always, is a scrupulous respect for that fact in its individual quality.

Tedlock's work brings to focus a movement among certain anthropologists and poets toward adequate and exact ("total") translation of oral narrative. To readers of *Stony Brook* or *Alcheringa* (which Tedlock edits with Jerome Roth-

Ca Dao: Folk Lyrics from Vietnam

JOHN BALABAN
Mr. Balaban collected and translated these poems in South Vietnam, on a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The poems, recorded in 1971 and 1972, are in an oral lyric tradition that is at least a thousand years old and uniquely Vietnamese.

ON LEAVING THE VILLAGE

Even when cross planks are nailed down,
bamboo bridges are shakily unsound. Hard going.
Hard going, so push back: to tidal flats to catch crab,
to the river for fish, to our sandy patch for melons.

AT THE EXILED KING'S RIVER PAVILION

Evening. Before the King's pavilion
people are sitting, some fish, some are sad and grieving,
some loving, in love, remembering, waiting, watching.
Whose boat plies the river mists?
. . . offering so many rowing songs
that stir these mountains and river, our nation.

LOVE LAMENT

Stepping into the field, sadness fills my deep heart.
Bundling rice sheaves, tears dart in two streaks.
Who made me miss the ferry's leaving?
Who made this shallow creek that parts both sides?

THE RED CLOTH

Sad, idle, I think of my dead mother:
her mouth chewing white rice, tongue removing fish bones.
The red cloth drapes the mirror-stone:
Men of one country must show love for each other.

THE SHIP OF REDEMPTION

The bell of Linh Mu Pagoda tolls,
awakening the drowsy soul,
probing, reminding one of debt,
washing one clean of worldly dust.
A boat crosses to the Western Lands.

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enberg) or Rothenberg's *Technicians of the Sacred* and *Shaking the Pumpkin*, this will come as no news. But the record is an important one: as Dell Hymes says in view of Tedlock's versions, "No one will be able to go on in the old way now."

The battle cry went out with Hymes's essay of 1965 on the translation of several Northwest Indian songs (reprinted in *Stony Brook* #1/2). At the same time, Munro Edmonson discovered that the great Quiche Maya *Popol Vuh* was not the prose it had been thought to be, but rather a poetry of semantic couplets. With these precedents in hand, Tedlock returned to his tapes. What he finally heard led him to change and refine his entire procedure. (Tedlock's preface sets this out, but one can turn to his essay, "On the Translation of Style in Oral Narrative," *JAF* 1971, for greater detail and a critique of translations from the Zuni.) Because of his care, we can now hear, as if for the first time, the two Bow Priests sent by the Sun; they lead the Zuni into "emergence" from the earth's black cellarage into this dry bright world:

> *"YOU MUST DO YOUR BEST*
> *to look at your father*
> *for you will hardly be able to SEE.*
> *There in the room full of soot, when we entered upon your roads, we could hardly SEE.*
> *This is the way it will be with you, CERTAINLY."*
>
> The Beginning, Part I

And we can hear Andrew Peynetsa, the old man who narrates most of these tales, catch himself getting ahead at one point and saying, "But wait. . . ."

In every way, then, Tedlock's versions next to those of Bunzel or Benedict have the clarity, precisely, of "emergence." The curious reader can verify this by comparing Tedlock with several of the 1930s variants; and, should he require an original, Tedlock has printed one of the shorter tales with its Zuni text *en face*. As for the tales themselves, there are the two splendid histories of the tribe's origins in "the beginning"; and there are various fictions or *telapnaawe*, comic and vividly tragic and heroic. Surely the moving "Boy and the Deer" must be one of the finest tales of its kind. Each of the tales is thoroughly dramatic, in conventions of speech and form; Tedlock's unobtrusive fidelity permits that drama to appear in its integrity.

For instance, the lengthy, highly formal greeting-exchanges in "The Beginning"—the repeated summoning of priests from all of the cardinal directions—are not tedious, finally, to the alien ear. For they enact the urgency and difficulty of the journey about to be undertaken, as the Zuni prepare to climb from their native darkness into a new world. The repetition and formality of the narrative rhetoric constitute a preparation—for the actors, but for the auditors as well. In case after case like this, what are we admitting save that full and specific meaning is complete literary meaning after all? And yet much systematic study of such narrative has typically disregarded its specifically narrative features.

Near the beginning of *Seven Arrows*, the Cheyenne writer, Hyemeyohsts Storm, remarks: "Questioning is one of the most vital paths to understanding these Stories. . . . When you question, the Medicine Wheel is turned for you. . . . You too are a Medicine Wheel." His stories, also, are meant to be told, and I cannot help recalling Walter Benjamin describe, in his essay on Leskov, our newest poverty as hereditary isolatos: the loss of the storyteller's art and the story's power to lend "counsel" to its readers. Readers—but one must also say listeners, and finally tellers. For if a tale reaffirms the communicability of experience—and Storm's origin-tale of the Flowering Tree does that at once for cosmos, tribe and individual psychology—then it does so because we ourselves can still close some kind of circle. When we cannot, we "have no counsel either for ourselves or for others," as Benjamin puts it; and what he goes on to say might characterize any tale that we hear narrated:

> After all, counsel is less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding. To seek this counsel one would first have to be able to tell the story.

The dimensions of narrative which Tedlock preserves, then, are anything but trivial. When Lévi-Strauss discards them as inessential to the core meaning on which he finally goes to work, he loses more than we can afford to lose. Nostalgia tells us this, of course; but reason does also, and more powerfully. For if we cannot hear the tale as it is told, we cannot imagine ourselves telling it properly. And if we cannot do that, the tale cannot fully speak to us; "to seek . . . counsel one would first have to be able to tell the story."

In the Zuni "beginning" tale, the two Bow Priests at last set out to locate the earth's center (and thereby the people's) by calling in the giant Waterstrider—his legs reach either ocean—and marking the spot beneath his heart. Hidden at that spot is a stone; and on that center depends the coherence of the people and the creation itself. As we hear these tales narrated by Andrew Peynetsa and Walter Sanchez, the telling can put us in mind, perhaps, of the stone that we have never set anywhere, and the center we have never presumed to locate. And if that is too much for us, there is always the workmanly challenge to any anthropologist or poet-translator who follows Dennis Tedlock. As Tedlock himself was told by his informants, "anyone who falls asleep during a *telapnaawe* or who fails to stand up and stretch at the end of such a story may become a hunchback." □

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THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Even though Nixon said so, *Irene* is an enjoyable show. The musical, first produced in 1919, has a book by James Montgomery (now refurbished by Hugh Wheeler and Joseph Stein) that is a corny Cinderella story combining elements of *Pygmalion* and *Peg O' My Heart*. But that, to begin with, shelters it from any really hostile criticism: we need not pay it any mind.

The original score by Harry Tierney and Joseph McCarthy, of which only five or six numbers have been retained, has a faintly pleasant, old-time appeal; the others added for present purposes are hardly of a more memorable quality. The theatre's acoustics, by the way, are excellent, though its public address system impairs rather than enhances the dialogue's audibility.

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Where then is the show's attraction? It has Manhattan-style bounce and energy, evident in the cast and more especially in Peter Gennaro's staging of the musical numbers. He has a way of beginning many of the dances in grotesque gaucherie and then turning them into a rousing geometric brilliance. It is certainly not the 1919 manner, but it is immediate fun. Unpretentious as choreography, it is a lively window dressing that catches the eye and makes everything for the moment seem jubilantly hunky-dory.

While not astonishing, the cast is gratifying. The star is Debbie Reynolds. She is petite, spunky, sings nicely without effort, dances and taps neatly. She has done her homework to gain an easy competence. Her leading man, a newcomer named Monte Malcolm who plays an agreeably square businessman, is American dry and engagingly honest. He progresses from the stiff to the kind of good fellow who will make Irene, his Cinderella, a most loyal and loving husband. George Irving, who plays a Parisian couturier from Seventh Avenue (via Brooklyn), combines the comic artifice of the first and the perspiring pushiness of the second with considerable stage guile. Patsy Kelly is outrageously hilarious as an old Irish biddy, but why shouldn't she be outrageous? Are we supposed to take any of the proceedings as anything but a charade? To consider the show seriously is to give evidence of a lamentably foolish sophistication. *Irene* is show shop stuff mounted on a large scale with confident splash. At $15 a throw (for an orchestra seat) it is a night out on a careless day.

Yet the event gave me something to think about. It is produced in one of the town's two new theatres: this one, called the Minskoff (the name of the man who supplied the funds), is located on 45th Street and Broadway where the Astor Hotel once stood. The other theatre is the Uris, named after another real estate tycoon, on 51st Street, West of Broadway.

The Minskoff—not a particularly euphonious or glamorous name—holds 1,700 seats; like the Uris, it is situated in a gigantic office building. The Minskoff auditorium, for all its attempt at giving the spectators a sense of intimacy, still remains vast. Its stage is extremely spacious and sufficiently well equipped for great spectacles. (Years ago, plays like *The Whip*—which reproduced a train wreck and, if memory serves, a horse race, might have been fittingly housed in such a theatre.) But it would be difficult to imagine an ordinary "straight" play in it. Apart from grandiose productions, which today means big musicals, very little else will find this theatre a suitable site.

A production such as *Irene* costs around $1 million (one could run a good repertory company for a year on that) and its operating cost must be very near $90,000 a week. This means that the production must run at capacity for a very long time to recover the initial investment. *Irene* will probably prove a hit, due above all to the presence of Debbie Reynolds. But how many shows will be booked at this house with a similar monetary promise?

Considering these facts, other questions suggest themselves: is this kind of theatre good business? Hardly. It is typical of the present state of American show business in general. It is not economically sound, it is rarely concerned with art, and the quality of its entertainment is spotty. Is theatre then doomed? No, not the *theatre;* only a certain kind of theatre. Still, the heart of the true theatre person is never without hope or a quixotic enthusiasm.

I must avoid ending this column on so somber a chord. What struck me as peculiarly gay on arriving at the Minskoff building's theatre floor, reached by two escalators, is the upstairs lobby with its huge glass windows that look out on the street. The monstrous and mostly red neon signs which we now take for granted as we walk past or under them seem to flash more stunningly at this level than they normally do. There is something vulgarly festive in the sight. One isn't aware of the sorry rabble on the sidewalks, only the glow of our supposed prosperity. That is probably the most encouraging display one will ever see in this area. The Minskoff is Broadway sumptuous. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

The A.I.R. Gallery (97 Wooster Street) is continuing its series of two-women exhibitions with sculpture by Maude Boltz and collages by Nancy Spero (until April 4). Even before the close of its first season, the high quality of the work shown by this women's co-operative is almost legendary. Both of the present artists are admirable, though it happens that I am going to write about only one of them here. Nancy Spero's series, "Codex Artaud," is a remarkable compound of two kinds of sign in which verbal text and visual image interpenetrate. The linear form of writing progresses sequentially and the pictorial form of drawing expands spatially; i.e., the linear and the pictorial, despite the different time-rate at which we apprehend them, are conjoined.

Spero uses both impacted and fragmented human forms and prolonged quotation. The quotes are presented in large, irregularly typed capital letters that in their torn state resemble Ugaritic tablets. The texts, all from Artaud, late ravings in which he speaks for the underside of humanity, are brilliantly spatialized by Spero's images. She creates hybrids with multiple organs, autonomous heads whose distended tongues strive to compensate for lack of hands, and fragmented hellenistic bodies of worn gold. These are human images stretched to denote states of extreme feeling, whether shaken by orgasm or corroded by illness, in which the classical contour, as confirmed by bodily health and normal mobility, is contracted and displaced.

One of the conventions of collage, when it contains quoted verbal material, is that the literature act pictorially or, at least, that the word count be fairly low. A kind of visual tact has kept quotation within limits which Spero willingly violates. Hence the interplay of

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verbal and visual form already mentioned. Extended quotation also allows the artist to pay homage to the writer, the excerpts being on a scale that demands to be read. In a sense, Spero is humbling herself before Artaud, taking the most fallen of men and paying him the compliment of making her work depend on his. However, the gesture of servitude is also a means of annexation and she has in fact brought Artaud under her control. The art of the 20th century is sometimes characterized in terms of pure formality, but as good a case can be made out for the primacy of mixed media and compound sign systems. Spero's work is an important contribution to this aspect of contemporary art as it innovates in the area of the possible relationships between word and image.

The hanging of exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art has tended to extremes: either there have been Ziegfeld-type spectaculars, of the kind with which René d'Harnoncourt used to entertain the peasants, or there has been the permanent collection, jammed together as if the museum were pleading poverty and the need for space. Times have changed and the shortage of funds has arrested the parade of temporary exhibitions which museums counted on for box office. Adjusting to hard times, the Department of Public Information at the Modern is taking advantage of an expanded and thought-out installation of works from the permanent collecion, entitled "A New Perspective," by presenting it as if it were a temporary exhibition. In fact, it will be around for a while.

The paintings are rationally arranged, one thing leading to another according to the logic of art historical chronology. The few exceptions to this pattern are jarring: for instance, the Dadaists are awkwardly reached after Picasso's "Guernica." The decision to star this famous but inflated piece at the entrance to the third-floor galleries caused this incoherence. On the second floor, Expressionism is awkwardly separated from post-Impressionism by three intervening galleries devoted to Cubism. I take it that the intention here was to confirm the received position of Cubism as both modern and *constructed* (a part of the pure form theory of modern art) and not to overdo the attention paid to a ragged bunch of painters who are less to curatorial taste than the Cubists.

In general, the amazing resources of the museum could not be better employed. For example, the rooms devoted to Cubism and Classicism and to Matisse, both on the second floor, are first-rate. Apart from a vista with a dramatic but misplaced Morris Louis, the property of the museum is shown with a proper lack of ostentation. The curatorial staff, under William Rubin's direction, has conceived and carried out a clear route through the 20th century in which historical succession is given spatial analogues. It is an arrangement designed for traffic rather than contemplation. Understanding accompanies the act of walking and everybody who knows how crowded the museum gets will appreciate the sound judgment behind this approach. The works relate cogently to one another and are chosen to present not the diversity of the century but its network of presumed continuities (such as the line from Cézanne to Cubism to Abstract Art).

This form of display does involve some slackening of that other pleasure of museums, apart from acquiring historical information, of contact with dense, evocative cultural objects. Once the curatorial staff decided on a fundamentally expository hang, the sense of succession demanded a price. One's attention tends to fan out past the individual work to the easily visible, and valid, comparisons with other artists all around. The concrete object becomes an episode in a series rather than a solid thing to be contemplated. The paintings are treated as signifiers of art history rather than as being themselves what is signified by art history. This inversion means that the individual works are somewhat de-physicalized by being made signs of the evolution of art.

The suite of galleries given to sculpture is crowded, or appears so, because of the picturesque siting of the pieces, in terms of contrast and surprise. The Brancusi room is the only disaster: the pieces are placed on a white dais behind a barrier. A gouache by the artist on the wall shows his studio with a casual profusion of objects in it, an effect the museum has tried to duplicate, while also keeping the sculptures out of reach. What with the railings and the white floor, the installation looks like an ice-skating rink. □

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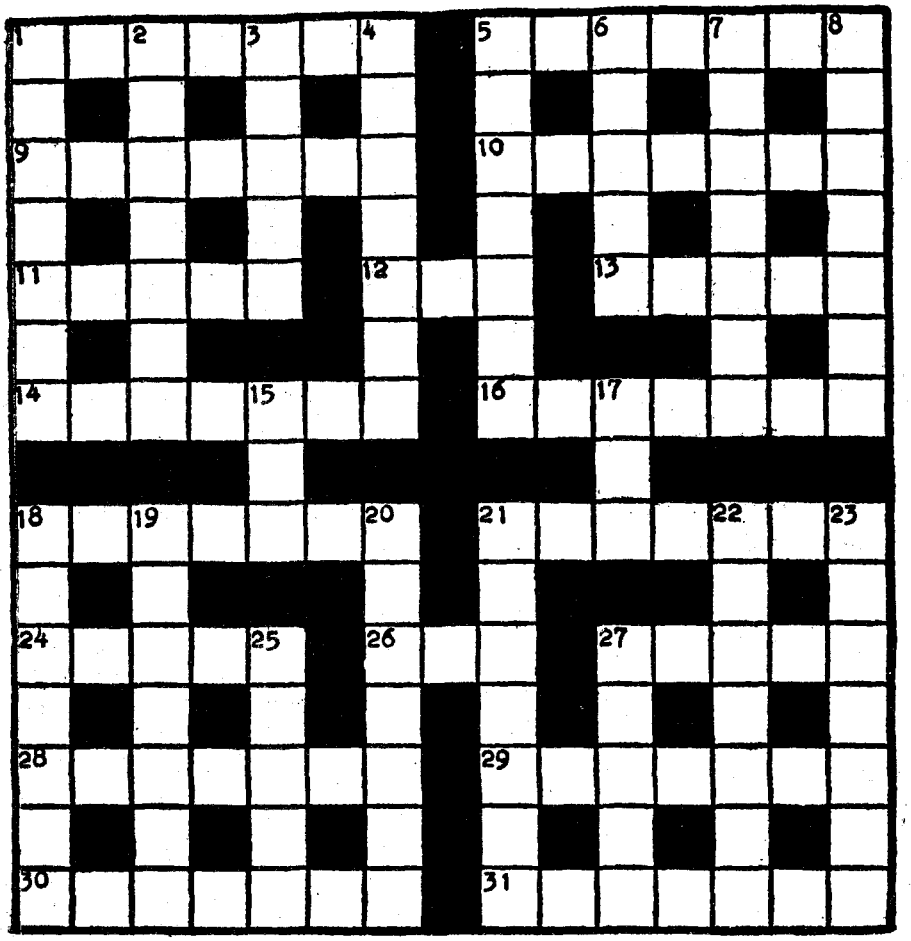
Crossword Puzzle No. 1483

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 5 across Sounds like a bargain to the ship's carpenter, but the story is only academic. (7,2,5)
9 and 10 What a car salesman might be doing, with the issue being just peanuts. (7,7)
11 Arrangement of a group above the family command. (5)
12 See 27 down
13 Issued by authority as part of the dictionary. (5)
14 Having been shot, or in a position likely to be shot? (7)
16 One is not likely to be found on the side of a speaker. (7)
18 Not like coffee cake—by which the rent might be made. (7)
24 Artistic supporter found in such a type as El Greco. (5)
26 Much of this was about nothing we may have seen put on. (3)
27 In Italy, it starts right in the middle of family heads, commonly. (5)
28 This adds 12 percent to the amount considered standard, so is hardly short weight! (4,3)
29 Troubled hours in which we might find support. (7)
30 Relating to part of the contents of the chest, more than one form is suggested.
31 Where transportation back perhaps rubs the wrong way? (7)

DOWN

1 and 18 down As an excuse, a pupil might with a teacher—or else escape completely. (4,3,3,4)
2 Counterfeit pound, we might have admitted. (5,2)
3 A sweet thing like this to be eglantine?
4 Where you might find a wild glen, and yet its neighbor has still wilder glens. (7)
5 Polite reference to a lady fly-by-night that we haven't seen for ages! (7)
6 A good place to hide things such as money, one might suggest. (5)
7 and 21 across Early start of an essay with such as FDR? (7,7)
8 Descriptive of Keats's unheard melodies.
15 One way to go downhill fast, after having cold. (3)
17 and 21 down The kitty piles up, evidently, when they're wild. (10)
18 See 1 down
19 Reputedly it makes one more lovable.
20 Hook and other pirates may have used one. (7)
22 More like 4 was supposed to be in the old days? (7)
23 Shows how what they dumped at Boston shoud be a little longer! (7)
25 No article with the Papal State's treaty could be shown recently. (5)
27 and 12 across Calling for a drop? Exactly, since it might be a black lead. (8)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1482

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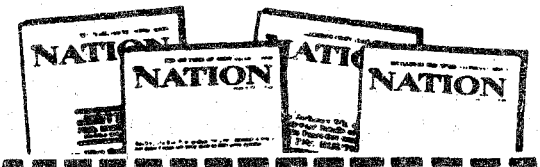

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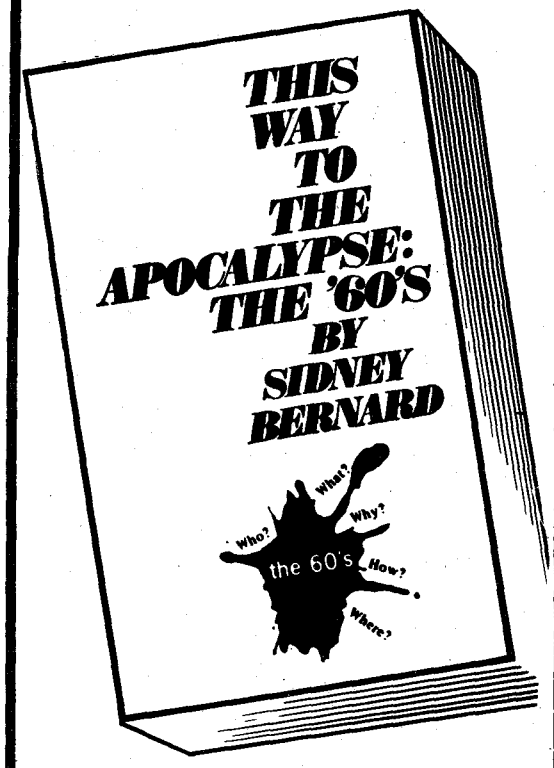

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